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Dedication

TO

THE MEMORY OF

GENERAL PHILIP BOTHA

O. F. S. ARMY

WHO NOBLY DIED FIGHTING FOR BOER INDEPENDENCE
AGAINST THE ARCH-ENEMY OF HIS RACE
AND COUNTRY;
AS AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE OF
ADMIRATION, AND IN GRATEFUL RECOLLECTION
OF THE
HOSPITALITY AND COURTESIES OF
OSSPRUIT CAMP, O. F. S.,
1900

PREFACE

AFTER resigning membership of the British House of Commons in October, 1899, as a personal and political protest against a war which I believed to be the greatest infamy of the nineteenth century, I proceeded, a short time afterwards, to the Transvaal to see and learn more about the little nation against whose liberty and land this crime had been planned and executed.

This book embodies the facts and information which I obtained in my intercourse with the leaders and people of both Republics. It also contains the impressions which followed from a few months' close contact with them during their unparalleled struggle to retain their independence.

I owe the expression of grateful acknowledgments for the facilities given and the assistance willingly tendered to me by members of both governments during my stay in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and to numerous officers and officials who supplied me with authentic details of the earlier battles of the campaign in Natal and on the western borderland.

My thanks are specially due to Dr. Reitz, State Secretary of the S. A. R.; Attorney-General (now Commandant) Smuts; and to Mr. Piet Grobler, also of the Administration. To Commandant-General Louis Botha, his military secretary Adjutant Sandberg, Adjutant Robert Emmet, Field Cornet Cherrie Emmet, General De la Rey, General Tobias Smuts, Colonel Trichardt (head of the Transvaal artillery), Colonel Blake, the Hollander officers in charge of the English prisoners at Pretoria, the Landrosts of Pretoria and Johannesburg, and to the editors and proprietors of the "Volksstem" and of the "Standard and Diggers' News."

I am likewise under similar obligations to President Steyn and the members of his administration in Kroonstad, O. F. S.; to the late General Philip Botha, and to all the officers of his staff at Osspruit Camp; to Judge (now Commandant) Hertzog, Commandant George Brand, the Landrosts of Kroonstad and Hoopstad, and to many more minor officials, officers and burghers who were my traveling and tent companions in my visits to the various camps,

laagers and localities embraced in my journeys through the two Republics and north Natal.

The late Count Villebois-Mareuil, and M. Leon Grunberg, of Paris, also supplied me with most interesting statements based upon their unique experience during the initial stages of the war, in which both had played conspicuous and romantic parts.

M. D.

DALKEY, IRELAND, February, 1902.

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THE
BOER FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

INTRODUCTORY

ENGLAND'S ALLEGED "ENLIGHTENED" OBJECTS IN THE WAR EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF HER SOUTH AFRICAN RECORD—THE ORIGIN OF THE BOER—HIS COLONIZATION OF CAPE COLONY—MR. FROUDE'S TESTIMONY—GENERAL JOUBERT'S STORY OF BRITISH INJUSTICE TOLD IN HIS LETTER TO QUEEN VICTORIA—A DRAMATIC SKETCH OF BOER STRUGGLES AND OF PERSISTENT ENGLISH OPPRESSION—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S HISTORIC PRAISE OF THE BOER RACE—HIS DENUNCIATION OF "A NATIONAL CRIME."

THE present war is the third attempted conquest by the English of the fourth country which the Dutch race has settled and civilized in South Africa. This fact is purposely ignored in the various attempts which British writers are making to explain "the enlightened" motives with which an Empire, boasting of 300,000,000 subjects, has provoked a conflict with a little Republic of 150,000 souls, which possessed the richest gold mines in the world. It is a fact, however, which forms a material part of the case against the English in this instance, and somewhat discounts the character and value of the "reforming" purpose that lay behind the Jameson Raid, and which inspired and informed the equally altruistic spirit and intent of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's diplomacy.

The first act of British aggression upon the land and liberty of the Boers is now near a hundred years old. It occurred in Cape Colony. This part of the dark continent had been selected by a company of Dutchmen as a desirable settlement. As early as 1652, a number of adventurers from Holland arrived there, and commenced the labor of founding a white community among the Kaffir races. They were followed by other contingents from time to time; among these being several hundred Huguenots, who had fled from the religious oppression of Louis XIV. in search of freedom of faith and of personal liberty at the Cape of Good Hope. These expatriated Frenchmen soon mingled with the hardy emigrants from the Netherlands, and in time helped to produce the sturdy, independence-loving race which has won the admiration of the

world during the past three years by its courage and capacity in once more resisting the military might of the British Empire.

The Boers grew and prospered in Cape Colony. They conquered the Hottentots around them, and shed far less blood in subduing the natives to their rule than did any British settlement which was ever planted among savage races. Towns were built, roads were made, lands were cultivated, and the Colony progressed in peace and in industry, unmolested by white foes, for seven generations.

Then the English arrived. The French Revolution had involved the Netherlands in the subsequent struggles between Napoleon and European powers, and near the end of the eighteenth century the British took possession of the Cape, in the rôle of a good friend anxious to protect the territory of a weak neighbor and ally. The Colony was restored to Holland in 1802, but was again taken by the English in 1806. The seizure on both occasions was declared to be in the interest of the House of Orange. The final retention of the Colony by the English put the object of their previous intervention in its proper light.

The Boers were violently opposed to the intrusion of the British, but were too weak to resist successfully a usurpation of their country by a Power which had done nothing whatever to develop or promote its prosperity or civilization. As Mr. James A. Froude says in his "Oceana": "They resented it; the hotter spirits resisted; they were called rebels, and were shot and hanged in the usual fashion."

The new rulers soon commenced their traditional policy of undermining the nationality of their unwilling subjects. The Dutch language was abolished in the courts, and schools were also ordered to be conducted in the English tongue. The Boers were made to feel by their British governors and officials that they were a subjugated people, with few rights or privileges left to them in the land of their birth beyond those enjoyed by the Kaffirs around them.

The native races were, in fact, preferred before them, and enjoyed a greater measure of toleration from the English than was shown by these to the former rulers of the country. This treatment naturally deepened the discontent of the Boers, and made the rule of the British more hateful and unbearable.

"We justified our conquest to ourselves," wrote Mr. Froude, "by taking away the character of the conquered, and we constituted ourselves the champions of the colored races against them, as if they were oppressors and robbers. . . . We had treated them unfairly as well as unwisely, and we never forgive those whom we have injured." (*Oceana, pp. 34, 35.*)

In one of the most eloquently pathetic letters ever written, the late Commandant-General Joubert told Queen Victoria, in June, 1899, five months before the present war was declared, the story of the Boer race, and of the continuity of her country's persistent oppression of his people from 1806 down to the date when he knew that England was once again resolved upon an act of spoliation. He related the systematic persecutions which drove the Dutch farmers into the Great Trek —into the abandonment of the country which they had, in a sense, created for white men. He told of the indignities to which the Boers were subjected, and the hopeless outlook created for their children in the settled purpose of their complete domination at the hands of English officials. It was such a story as a doomed Thracian leader might have told to a Roman patrician on the eve of a gladiatorial display within the Colosseum.

COMMANDANT-GENERAL PIET J. JOUBERT

After alluding to the fact that the English officials tried their utmost to prevent Piet Retief and his companions from providing themselves with ammunition on their departure from Cape Colony to face the savage foes and wild animals which would be encountered across the Drakensberg and the Orange River, General Joubert continued:

"Your Majesty, who can describe the sufferings they endured? They ventured forth, trusting in God, to rid themselves of all human despotism, in search of a free land for their children and children's children. They wandered in small groups further and further, ever onward, until they arrived at the Vaal River. Here they pitched their tents and regarded the new country as their El Dorado. . . . Their hopes were short-lived. Moselekatse, head of a cruel Kaffir tribe, came with a large force of warriors from the far

north, and attacked a small party of Boers near the river, no warning having reached them of the intended onslaught. The odds were twenty to one, but God gave them courage, and they not only repulsed the horde of savages, but succeeded in rescuing several children and several wounded women who had been captured by the Kaffirs. . . . Other parties of Boers from Cape Colony had gone eastward. . . . With these they (those who had fought as above) now decided to combine. Moselekatse, however, pursued them with a second expedition stronger than the previous contingent, commanding it not to return so long as there remained a Boer living. . . . The fleeing Boers reached Vechtkop, in the Orange Free State, where, recognizing the futility of continuing their flight, they built up a laager or camp with their wagons, and calmly awaited their pitiless foe. Prepared to die in the face of overwhelming odds, they nevertheless determined to fight manfully to the last, trusting in God. As the enemy pressed on, each Boer made the best use of his rifle, causing the smoke to ascend in such volumes to heaven that even the flying enemy imagined the Boers had been vanquished, and that their laager was in flames and its defenders utterly annihilated. We were afterwards told that when the intelligence reached Grahamstown, Cape Colony, your Majesty's subjects were so elated thereat that they celebrated the receipt of the news by bonfires and other illuminations, thinking that the last of the Boers had fallen."

General Joubert next told Her Majesty how the Boers, who had thus fought for their lives in search of a new home, crossed into Natal through the passes of the Drakensberg and united their fortunes with those of Retief, Maritz, and Uys; leaders who had trekked into that country when the party to which Joubert's father had attached himself had ventured, as related, to gain the Transvaal, and had encountered Moselekatse and his savage legions. He told how Retief and his followers purchased the region of Natal from Dingaan, its dominant Zulu chief, and obtained a written agreement from him for a Boer settlement in that region; and continued his story of how the Dutchmen settled in and fought for their second country, to be again ousted out of it by British power:

"It is doubtless known to your Majesty how this cruel and barbarous Chief (Dingaan) mercilessly and treacherously murdered Piet Retief and his seventy men (whom he had invited to visit him), immediately afterwards sending out his commandoes to massacre those awaiting the return of Retief and the unsuspecting women and children. Thus without warning were 600 helpless old men, women and children butchered in cold blood. . . . A vessel arrived at Port Natal, and Captain Jarvis stepped on shore. 'Thank

God, assistance was at hand; now no more starvation. No more fear of the sword of Dingaan. Succor has come at last.' Such were the thoughts of many a simple-minded Boer. But, alas! how soon was their joy to be turned into grief and indignation, for how horribly surprised were they to learn that, instead of having come to their aid, he was sent to forbid them to fight with the natives and to disarm them!"

Joubert next relates how the Boers concealed their arms and ammunition from the prying eyes of Jarvis and his force, until they saw him take his departure. Two hundred men were then got together by Pieter Uys and Hendrick Potgieter, and they resolved to seek Dingaan in his lair and avenge the massacre of Retief and the 600 victims of England's protected savages. The Boers were, however, beaten in the fight and were compelled to retreat after having killed hundreds of their Kaffir foes, Uys and his little boy (a type of many a heroic lad who has fought and died in the present war against the whilom patrons of Dingaan) with several more farmers being slain in the fierce encounter.

Dingaan and his Zulus followed up their victory, and, encouraged by their success, resolved to exterminate the Dutchmen. It was again a fight for life on the part of the Boers, and at Bosmans River, near where Louis Botha defeated the English about the end of November, 1899, the little commando entrenched itself. After three days' continuous fighting, against thousands of Zulu foes, it gained a complete victory over Dingaan. The Boers made a frightful carnage of their assailants. "For years afterwards the veldt was white with their bones." The victors lost but one man in this battle; a circumstance which the pious pilgrim farmers attributed to the protecting care of the Almighty.

Andreas Pretorius, one of the greatest of the Boer leaders, now appeared on the scene, having with other Boers left the Cape Colony to aid his kindred to hold the newly occupied country against the Zulu tribes. He organized a force of 400 men from all the Boer settlements, and with these set forth in search of Dingaan and his hordes. Pretorius was as wise as he was brave. He was an ideal Boer general and statesman, and he well merits the title of being the father of the Boer nation of our day. He utterly defeated Dingaan, and destroyed his power forever in Natal, on the 16th of December, 1838; a day which has ever since been celebrated as "Dingaan's Day" by the Boer people, and once or twice in the present war by Boer generals in a manner not agreeable to their English foes.

General Joubert continues:

"One would have thought, your Majesty, that the Boer after this would have been left alone to live peaceably, praising his God in the country he had bought so dear. But no! His cup of bitterness was not yet emptied. The yoke of oppression had not yet been broken. Scarcely had the Boers laid out the village of Pietermaritzburg than threatening clouds began to gather and the alarm to sound again. Not the Kaffirs this time. No, a thousand times worse. The English came; an officer with a company of soldiers equipped with cannon and shell arrived. The officer was Captain Smith, and he came to annex the country as a possession of that mighty Empire, Great Britain—to make an end to our boasted independence and to destroy our peace."

The Boers were not tamely prepared to surrender the land for which they had sacrificed so much, and 200 of them attacked Smith and his men, putting them to flight and capturing their guns. English reenforcements soon arrived, however, and General Joubert tells what followed:

"The Boers were not trained to the use of cannon, and could not prevent the landing of a force stronger than themselves. They dared no longer fight the English, for the Kaffirs had already commenced to harass them from the rear. A Boer had been killed on his farm, another was murdered, and his wife and daughter subjected to the most inhuman treatment, ravished, and driven away naked. Others were assaulted and barely escaped with their lives. In this way the Kaffirs proved of great service to Captain Smith and his soldiers, who were besieged by the Boers, and had already been driven to the extremity of eating horseflesh, and who would undoubtedly have been obliged to capitulate had it not been for the harassing attacks of the Kaffirs in the rear of the Boers, which necessitated their hastening out to their farms in order to save their families from certain death. And thus it came to pass that the Boers lost their right to the territory of Natal which had been purchased with the blood of their slain."

England annexed Natal as she had already grabbed Cape Colony, and commenced at once the same policy of confiscation, of tyranny and of racial antagonism which drove the Boers out of their first homeland.

Other contingents of pilgrim farmers had in the meantime crossed the Orange River from Cape Colony, and settled in the region lying between that stream and the Vaal River. Thither many of the Natal Boers trekked after the destruction of the infant Republic beyond the Drakensberg. England was again on their track, and by an Act of the Imperial Parliament that whole territory, and the regions north to the Portuguese possessions, were de-

clared to be within the sphere of British rule! The Orange Territory thus followed Natal into English hands, after Pretorius had fought Sir Henry Smith at Boomplaats in August, 1849, and the Boers were compelled to retire over the Vaal River into the Transvaal. There a colony had already been established on a concession made by the Portuguese to Potgieter and Pretorius, and the town of Potchefstroom had been founded as the capital of the (third) new country to which the Boers had been driven by the English.

General Joubert omitted at this point in his letter to Queen Victoria to remind her that, while her soldiers were thus employed in taking countries from the Boers as fast as these could conquer and settle them, the Kaffirs were causing trouble to their British protectors. The Basutos rose in revolt against the English in the Orange River Settlement, and the latter appealed to the Boers to help quell the insurrection. The Boers rightly refused, and it became necessary to recognize how difficult, if not impossible, it would be for the English troops in South Africa at the same time to hold the Boers in subjection, and to keep the Basutos and other tribes under control, now that these had ceased to make the Dutchmen the sole objects of their murdering and cattle-raiding warfare.

Joubert passed over this chapter in the story of British aggression, and continued his letter as follows:

"It had by this time begun to dawn upon your Majesty's Government that it was more politic to leave the Boer severely alone than to be everlastingly pursuing him from place to place. With the object of assuring the Boers that they would not be interfered with north of the Vaal River, and could administer their own affairs, your Majesty's special Commissioner, Mr. C. M. Owen, was sent (to the Boers) with the result that a Convention was entered into on the 16th of January, 1852, signed by your Majesty's Commissioners, Major Hogg and Mr. Owen; the first three articles of which read as follows:

"'*Art. I.* Her Majesty's Commissioners, on behalf of the British Government, do absolutely guarantee to the emigrant farmers north of the Vaal River the right of administering their own affairs, and of governing in accordance with their own laws, without any interference whatsoever on the part of the British Government, and that no extension shall be made by the said Government north of the Vaal; with the additional assurance that it is the fervent desire of the British Government to maintain peace and free trade, and to promote a friendly understanding with the emigrant Boers occupying or still to occupy the said territory; and it is further understood that these terms are to be mutually adhered to.

"'*Art. II.* Should there arise any misunderstanding regarding

the meaning of the word Vaal River, the question shall be decided by a mutually appointed Commission.

"'*Art. III.* That Her Majesty's Commissioners disavow all compacts of whatever nature with the colored natives north of the Vaal.'"

Two years subsequently, the freedom and independence conceded to the Transvaal in the Sand River Convention was, likewise, under a duly signed treaty, obtained by the Orange Free State, and both Republics were thus recognized and declared by England to be two sovereign States, absolutely free from all British rule or interference.

Mr. Froude, the English historian, relates in his book "Oceana" the shameful breach by his country of these treaties, and I will leave General Joubert's letter to Queen Victoria for a moment so as to support his testimony by the evidence of so thoroughly conservative a British writer as the author already quoted.

"The ink on the treaty of Aliwal North" (the Convention recognizing the independence of the Free State), says Mr. Froude, "was scarcely dry when diamonds were discovered in large quantities in a district which we had ourselves treated as a part of the Orange Territory before our first withdrawal, and which had ever since been administered by Orange Free State magistrates. There was a rush of diggers from all parts of the country. . . . There was a notion that the finest diamond mine in the world ought not to be lost to the British Empire. . . . It was an ill hour we lent ourselves to an aggression for which there was no excuse. Lord Kimberley gave his name to the new Settlement. The Dutch were expelled. The manner in which we acted was insolent in its cynicism. We had gone in as the champions of the Chief Waterboer. We gave Waterboer and his Griquas a tenth of the territory. We kept the rest and all that was valuable ourselves. . . . The treaty of Aliwal North is our all sufficient condemnation. This one action has been the cause of all the troubles which have since befallen South Africa." (*Oceana, pp. 40, 41.*)

Returning to General Joubert's letter: he touches briefly upon the disgraceful transaction so strongly denounced by Mr. Froude, and reminds Queen Victoria of the additional breach of the treaty of Sand River in the forcible seizure of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone and a British force on the 12th of April, 1877, on the pretexts that the Republic was too weak to resist native insurrections—instigated by British agency—and that some of the burghers favored the introduction of English rule. The Commandant-General continues:

"Your Majesty is probably aware that the Boers, notwithstand-

ing their indignation at this great wrong, submitted to the law and preserved order, intending to petition your Majesty against this manifestly unjust breach of the Convention, committed in your Majesty's name. They, therefore, without a murmur permitted the publication of the British proclamation announcing the act of annexation. When, however, they wanted to have a proclamation printed, declaring to the world their rights, Major Clarke ordered his men to open fire on them—and this without previous warning or the proclaiming of war. Thus, on December 16, 1880, war was declared by England against the Boers, regardless of the Convention of 1852, wherein their independence was guaranteed to them."

The old veteran next tells the story of the "war of freedom," which culminated in the victory of Majuba, gained by himself, but of which personal achievement he makes no mention in his narrative. He pays a glowing tribute of praise to the action of Mr. Gladstone in effecting the settlement which followed Majuba.

"Actuated by a generous and noble impulse he caused the unjust war to cease and restored the honor of Great Britain by transforming an act of violence into a magnanimous deed. . . . The Boers were free again, and they hoped it would now go better with them. They vainly imagined so. Poor Transvaal! You have hardly survived one disaster, when two others stand staring you in the face.

"Unfortunately a rich gold mine was discovered in our country. Poor and abandoned men began soon to flock to this new El Dorado, and were presently followed by a legion of unscrupulous speculators. Afterwards certain ambitious capitalists arrived on the scene, who knew how to use their influence and were indifferent as to what rôle they played or of what became of the country so long as they could increase their wealth tenfold. And to what end did they eventually apply their gold, derived from the Transvaal mines? Let history tell your Majesty, and it will prove that it was not devoted to the good of the country or the welfare of their fellowmen; but, on the contrary, to the detriment of the country whose hospitality they were enjoying.

"Their object was to overthrow the Government and to rob the people of their liberty, by force if necessary. As they had money in abundance, the proceeds of the gold they had won from the mines, they bought thousands of rifles and (some) Maxim cannons for the purpose of using them against the people of the Transvaal. With this aim in view, they had made a compact with one Cecil Rhodes to undertake a raid into the Transvaal, Dr. Jameson acting as the tool. . . . Altho we had it in our power to refuse to grant quarter or pardon to Jameson and his gang of freebooters, we did not shoot them down as perhaps another military power would have done, or even follow the example of Slachter's Nek.

The thought that they were British subjects sufficed for the Boers not to treat them according to their deserts, but to hand them over to the law officers of your Majesty to be dealt with as your Majesty deemed fit. And what is the thanks we get for our magnanimity for liberating Jameson, Rhodes' henchman? Instead of thanks, we are cursed with the revival of the Johannesburg agitation of 1895-96. . . .

"Will your Majesty permit a small weak State to be oppressed and overthrown by the world-renowned power and might of Great Britain simply owing to the misrepresentations of the persons I have already mentioned ?

"Such is the inquiry of him who considers it an honor and a privilege to extol your Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India. . . . He will never believe that your Majesty will suffer the sacred rights of a weak, peace-loving people to be violated in your name, and South Africa to be cast into grief and mourning.

"Such is the wish and prayer of your Majesty's most humble petitioner,

"P. J. JOUBERT."

As a postscript to General Joubert's vain appeal to the British monarch to avert a war against the South African Republic, the following eloquent testimony to the historic justice of the Boer cause, and outspoken denunciation of the wrong and iniquity of any British attempt to annex the Transvaal or to destroy its independence, will not be inappropriate :

"The Boers are animated by a deep and even stern religious sentiment, and they inherit from their ancestors—the men who won the independence of Holland from the oppressive rule of Philip II. of Spain—they inherit from them their unconquerable love of freedom and liberty. Are they not qualities which commend themselves to men of the English race ? Is it against such a nation that we are to be called upon to exercise the dread arbitrament of arms ? These men settled in the Transvaal in order to escape foreign rule. They had had many quarrels with the British. They left their homes in Natal as the English Puritans left England for the United States, and they founded a little Republic of their own in the heart of Africa. In 1852 we made a treaty with them, and we agreed to respect and guarantee their independence; and I say under these circumstances, is it possible we could maintain a forcible annexation of the country, without incurring the accusation of having been guilty, I will not say of national folly, but I say of national crime ?" (The *Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain, M. P.*, at Birmingham, June 7, 1881: *Authorized edition of speeches—1885—pp. 18-19.*)

Chapter I

THE TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC AN INDEPENDENT NATION AFTER THE LONDON CONVENTION—A COUNTRY OF PEACE AND CIVILIZATION—CIVIC ORDER AT JOHANNESBURG—THE BOER SYSTEM OF EDUCATION—THE TRANSVAAL CONSTITUTION—DEMOCRATIC FEATURES—PRINCIPLE OF THE REFERENDUM—RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES—THE JUDICIARY—THE VOLKSRAAD—LAND LAWS—HERBERT SPENCER'S COMPARISON OF THE TRANSVAAL WITH ENGLAND BEFORE THE REFORM BILL—AUTHOR'S COMPARISON OF TRANSVAAL WITH ENGLAND OF THE PRESENT.

THE short spell of independence enjoyed by the Transvaal Boers under the Sand River Convention was too checkered to offer much encouragement to the various tasks of settled government. War followed war with native races, instigated by English agency, rendering the labor of internal administration difficult and spasmodic. The real, independent life of the Republic dates, therefore, from the signing of the London Convention of 1884. Reckoning from that year to the outbreak of hostilities in October, 1899, we have a small nation in full possession of its own freedom, of initiative and action, for a period of only fifteen years. It is, consequently, a Government of this age, confronted from 1890 until forced into the present conflict with unscrupulous English intrigue and combinations, that has been held up by the capitalist press to the opprobrium of the civilized world for faults and failures! Can it not be asked, in all fairness, whether there has ever been written in the history of nations a more grotesque parody of just criticism than that which applies the codes and standards of States hundreds of years in the enjoyment of freedom, to the acts of a nation of less than 150,000 souls, and judges thereby what it has and has not done for "human progress, civilization, and enlightenment," within the space of fifteen years? It is as if a child of tender age were denounced and cited for punishment because he had not developed the personal strength of a Sandow, or the mental equipment of a Herbert Spencer. And it is for the inevitable faults of inexperience, and for falsely accused failure, that this little State has been hounded down by its English enemies in the press of

England and America, and handed over to the power of the British Empire for reform by strangulation.

No one who wanted to be a witness to the truth could travel through the Transvaal, either before war began or during its earlier progress, without seeing evidence everywhere of both careful and enlightened administration in its cities and towns, and of comfort and content in the homes and habits of the people. Pretoria is a city handsome in every sense. Its public edifices, notably its Government Buildings and Palace of Justice, would do credit to any European capital. Its streets are wide, and are lit with electric light. It possesses as good a telephone service as any British town of equal size, while the whole country is served with efficient railway and telegraphic systems. Pretoria impressed the visitor as a well-ruled city; bright, comfortable, and clean; furnished with an admirable market, and an abundant water supply. Its working classes were better housed than those of London, Manchester, or Dublin, while the taxation on wages in the Transvaal was much less than the amount which English working men have to pay annually in their own country.

Johannesburg alone, the center of the anti-Boer agitation, would amply vindicate Boer Government, and refute the false statements of its worst enemies, could the place have been seen by fair-minded men, and all the facts relating to its people, their character and pursuits, have been impartially considered. Here was the center of the richest gold mines in the world, inhabited by over 100,000 white people, and fully 80,000 Kaffirs who were employed in the mines of the town and locality. The whites embraced, along with the reputable classes, all the elements known to flock to such a center: men of the worst character and lowest passions; purveyors of prostitution, gamblers, cheats, sharpers, scoundrels, and loafers—all of alien, not one of Boer, blood. Not a single English critic has had the sense of fairness to take account of the difficulties in the way of the police and the administrators of justice in dealing with a city so inhabited, and containing within its limits more potential agencies, passions, and incitements to civic and social disorder than any other city in Christendom. And yet, what was the actual record of Johannesburg in its relation to law and order from 1890 to 1899? I assert in all confidence that there have been less murders, less rapes, less serious outrages on person and property, among the whole white population within this unique city during these ten years, than in any single city in England of equal population for a like period. Eighty thousand savages were kept under orderly control without undue severity, and made subject to civilized laws and customs in a manner reflecting the highest credit upon the police

and magistracy of Johannesburg. General order was maintained without any violent interference with the liberty of citizens (less by far than occurs in Ireland to-day), and when it became necessary to the purposes of the plots and plans of Boer enemies within their gates to libel these police and officials of the law, all the cases which the model, moral Uitlander "reformers" could place at Sir Alfred Milner's disposal for his indictment of the State which Englishmen had conspired to destroy, embraced an alleged murder of an Englishman, which turned out to be, at worst, a case of manslaughter; the murder, by undetected ruffians, of a lady for her crusade against illicit drink traffic; an attack by a Field Cornet upon a Cape Kaffir family; an organized disturbance of a Rhodesian meeting, and a few minor instances of alleged failures of justice. These and nothing more. The meagerness of the list bore eloquent evidence to the success of the Government which had kept such a place in such order.

A popular conviction was fostered in England that President Kruger and his "oligarchy" were either the foes of education or were indifferent to the spread of instruction among the Boers. "Ignorant," "half-civilized," were common expressions used about them by speakers and writers who took no trouble to ascertain a truth which for the purposes of their argument they were not over-anxious to find. Most of the talk of this kind was indulged in by persons who were probably thinking of the educational centers of Oxford and Cambridge, and of a much more recently organized English School Board system, as a proud contrast to the resources of the benighted Dutchmen of the Transvaal. But these Dutchmen had only fifteen or sixteen years of full self-governing existence in which to build up their educational centers and system, and the following is the record of what they have done for the instruction of the children of the people within that period:

Professor Mansvelt, Superintendent of Education in the State School of Pretoria, kindly supplied the facts and figures herein adduced.

In 1882 the pupils in the public schools of the South African Republic numbered 875. In 1898 they numbered 14,702; an increase of over 1,500 per cent. in fifteen years.

The character of the Boer system of instruction was threefold: primary, secondary, and higher education. Primary and secondary instruction were given in the village and ward schools. Higher education was confined to the upper classes of the State Girls' School and the State Boys' School (called the State Model School), in the State Gymnasium; an institution equivalent in teaching and in subjects to a French lycée or an English college. Then there

was the State School of Mines, in which the character of the instruction approached more to a university teaching than to that of a high school.

The total number of schools (in 1898) in the Transvaal amounted to 509; 462 of these being rural (village and ward schools), and 47 urban schools.

The attendance, in the year quoted, averaged, for rural schools, 91 per cent., and in urban schools, 85.

Professors, certificated and other teachers numbered 830: 578 male, and 252 female, instructors; these teachers being divided, according to nationality, into 323 Europeans, mostly Dutch; 349 born in Cape Colony; and 158 born within the South African Republic.

The program of instruction covered reading, writing, arithmetic, sacred history, history of South Africa, the Dutch language, object lessons, recitation, geography, and singing, in the primary schools; while in the secondary and higher establishments the program embodied geometry, algebra, living languages, drawing and design, physiology, botany, zoology, chemistry, dead languages, bookkeeping, and technical instruction.

The sum expended by the Republic on its schools and scholars in 1882, amounted to £10,000. In 1898, the total amount so expended for that year was £227,000.

The salary of a male teacher was seldom below £120 per annum, "and all found." The majority of the ward and village teachers earned from £120 to £250. Teachers of State schools drew fixed salaries, from £150 to £500, according to rank and diploma. The professors of the State Gymnasium and of the School of Mines had a salary of £800 per annum.

The teaching of English was not prohibited in any school. It could be taught in all schools, if required by children's parents, after the third year's course. This applied to the children of Dutch parentage. To meet the requirements of the English population which had grown so rapidly in the Rand district since 1886, the Government had erected State Schools in which English was the medium of instruction in all standards; a few hours' teaching of Dutch per week being, however, compulsory—a limit which was increased gradually as the pupils advanced in their knowledge of the official language of the Republic.

It will be seen from this summary of the facts and figures dealing with the educational provisions made by the "ignorant Boers" within a brief period of fifteen years, that they were neither hostile nor indifferent to intellectual culture, but were, on the contrary, as anxious for, and as generous in their support of,

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popular education as any community of Anglo-Saxon people in any part of the British Empire.

The Republic itself had been described by its libelers as "a Republic in name only." They have been careful to deal in accusations and assertion, and not to invite a comparison between their statements and the truth. A reference to even the Grondwet of 1858, which has remained as the basis of the Transvaal Constitution, amended in 1896, will show that it was thoroughly democratic in principle and in purpose, if somewhat rustic in its machinery of law and general administration.

The salient features of the Constitution are found in the following clauses:

1. This State shall be called "The South African Republic."

2. The form of Government of this State shall be that of a Republic.

3. It desires to be recognized and respected by the civilized world as a free and independent people.

6. Its territory shall be open to all strangers who comply with the laws of the Republic. All persons who may happen to be in the territory of this Republic shall have an equal claim to protection of person and property.

8. The people demands the highest possible social liberty, and expects to derive such from the maintenance of its religious belief, from the observance of its engagements, from its submission to law, order, and right, and from the vindication of the same.

10. The people shall not tolerate any slave traffic or slavery in this Republic.

19. The liberty of the press shall be permitted, provided that the printer and publisher shall be responsible for all libelous, insulting, and defamatory articles.

The principles of Government embodied in this Grondwet were, as a matter of fact, more democratic than those of the British Constitution. But, in any case, the framers of these laws and regulations were arranging a Constitution for themselves, and not for Englishmen; for a small community in the wilds of South Africa, and not for the satisfaction of external critics. They were called upon to mold a system of rule and to make laws, not for a mixed nation, nor for a complex society, but for a community of a few thousand families, all of one faith, virtually of one occupation, and of identical social standing. The framers of the Boer code had no "classes" to consider, no warring religious sects to protect from each other, no claims of hereditary right to trouble the possession or occupation of land, and no complicated system of land tenure to regulate. They were free from these great difficulties,

and had only to provide for a people, few in number, who were not economically or otherwise in need of elaborate legislation. Still, the fundamental spirit underlying the Boer system of Government and laws was the unfettered power of the people to manage their own affairs.

The English have termed the Government of the Republic an "oligarchy," as becomes a nation of critics with a hereditary House of Lords having power to veto legislation demanded by the people. In Article 12 of the Grondwet it is provided that "the people shall place the legislative power in the hands of the Volksraad, the supreme authority of the country, consisting of representatives, or power-holders, of the people, elected by burghers entitled to vote, but subject to three months' time being allowed the people, if it so elect, to deliver to the Volksraad its opinion concerning any proposed law, with the exception of such laws as shall not permit of any delay."

Here we find a modified Referendum, adopted by these South African farmers at a time (1858) when to ask a vote for a laborer in England was considered revolutionary, and when the franchise was restricted to property qualification in a country which can now make the alleged denial of the franchise to aliens, in a small foreign State, in 1899, the pretended cause of a war.

It is true that membership of the Volksraad and offices in the Republic were reserved to the community of the State Church. Roman Catholics, and Protestants not subscribing to the tenets of the Heidelberg Catechism, were specifically disqualified for membership of the Chamber. This was a narrow and reactionary restriction, but it was only thirty years behind the British Parliament with respect to the non-admission of Catholics to the House of Commons who were not prepared to swear, before an assembly of Protestants, that the oldest faith in Christendom was "heretical and superstitious." Even to-day no Catholic can occupy either the Throne of England, the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (a Catholic country), or that of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords, while the King of England's coronation oath is grossly insulting, in some of its expressions, to no less than ten millions of his subjects who are Roman Catholics. No true friend of the Boer cause defends the denial to Catholics and others the rights of religious equality. Still, justice requires that the foregoing facts in the religious and social history of the Transvaal should be borne in mind, and also demands recognition of the fact that the Government of the Republic from 1890 to 1899 was surely, if slowly, adapting its laws and institutions to the needs and rights of its new population.

The administration of justice in the Transvaal was divided into courts, or departments, as follows: The High Court, sitting in Pretoria; a Circuit Court; a Landrost Court; Landrost Commissioners; and various other special Courts: such as Mine Commissioners, Native Commissioners, Field Cornets' Courts, and Resident Justices of the Peace.

Six judges constituted the High Court, and two formed a quorum. One judge attended regularly in camera.

Nine jurymen and one judge formed a Criminal Court. A unanimous verdict, as in England, was required in every criminal case.

THE PALACE OF JUSTICE, PRETORIA

There was no regular appeal from the decision of this Court, but no capital sentence could be carried out until the unanimous decision of the Executive Council, on a consideration of the facts of the case, was first obtained.

The judges of the High Court were invested by the Grondwet with jurisdiction over every person in the Republic, without distinction. They had to be duly qualified in jurisprudence, and held their positions for life.

A Circuit Court was constituted like a similar court in England; one judge of the High Court visiting districts periodically, and trying cases which could not be adjudicated upon by minor courts.

The two leading judges of the Transvaal High Court at the outbreak of the war, Chief Justice Gregorouski and Mr. Justice

Morice, were both strongly pro-British in their personal feelings and predilections.

One of the most serious charges brought against the Boer Government was that the independence of the High Court was deliberately taken away by a Volksraad resolution early in 1897. This allegation was a wilful distortion of the real facts, which were these: Two judges of the High Court had, for the first time, called in question the law-making power of a resolution of the Volksraad; they claiming for the High Court a right to test (toetsingsrecht) the constitutional validity of such resolution by comparison with the Grondwet of 1858. What the Volksraad did, in face of this pronouncement, was to affirm that a resolution of that body had always been the source of law, and must continue to possess that power if not vetoed by the people. This resolution or law was put in force without the three months' prior publication mentioned in Article 12 of the old Grondwet, but on the ground of the urgency of the case, as provided for in the power given for dispensing with that provision; the Volksraad claiming that the decision of the High Court judges had unsettled the law and created judicial confusion.

The Volksraad was compelled to assert its paramount authority in the making and in the changing of laws, but it did not in any way interfere with the independence of the High Court in administering the laws thus made. It was as if two English judges had declared that no new law passed by Parliament would have binding effect unless it was, in their opinion, in conformity with the laws which obtained a generation ago. In fact, what the two Transvaal judges tried to do was to set themselves above the Parliament of the country, with judicial power to restrict the law-making Assembly in its supreme right under the Constitution to make and mold the laws of the Republic.

Landrosts' Courts performed similar duties to County Courts in England, only jurisdiction was limited in civil cases to certain amounts in dispute as to property, and in criminal cases to the infliction of fines, or imprisonment not to exceed a term of six months.

Native Commissioners dealt with cases arising out of illegalities committed by Kaffirs. Competent interpreters attended such Courts, and assisted the plaintiffs or the accused, as the case might be. Crime of a serious character among Kaffirs had, however, to be dealt with in a Circuit Court.

The land laws of a nation who were land workers in both agricultural and pastoral pursuits were necessarily simple, being framed for themselves by men of the people. No country in Europe can

boast of a better land system, or of one more favorable to the chief and foundation of all industries. The system was an occupier ownership, subject to a tax by the State; not per acre but per farm. This tax was not to exceed forty rix dollars (rix dollar: about one shilling and six pence) or to be less than six rix dollars and a half, annually; the amount between the extremes to be regulated according to valuation by authorized persons. Owners of farms or of ground values living outside the Transvaal were to pay double taxes; a just principle applied to absentees, tho involving only a moderate penalty.

Land Commissioners held Courts for the settlement of disputes as to boundaries and other matters of a non-judicial nature arising out of land occupation. Burghers noted for their knowledge of land and for their reputation as wise, competent men were selected as Commissioners in each district. Appeals lay from all these minor Courts to either the Circuit Court or the High Court at Pretoria.

The transfer and registration of land was made quite simple, and involved no costly lawyer's search for title and the rest. All such sales were to be registered in the Landrost's office; the cost in the case of the transfer and registration of a farm being less than ten shillings. All surveyed or inspected farms were to be transferred within six months from date of sale, or the fees were doubled.

Such were the laws and Constitution, briefly summarized, of the Boer nation, which a class-ruled England, boasting of hereditary law-makers, and of a land system the most reactionary in principle to be found in the civilized world, condemned as unsuited to the requirements of the Uitlander population of the Rand!

To provide a plausible justification for the contemplated overthrow of the little Republic, and for the annexation of the country to the British Empire, it became a necessary part of the capitalist-Uitlander plot, and of the correlated Chamberlain-Milner diplomacy, to libel the Boer State, and to hold up its institutions, laws, and customs to the ridicule and contempt of other nations. The reptile Rhodesian organs of Johannesburg and Cape Town forged the calumnies, and the capitalist press of Great Britain, the British Colonies, and, largely, of America, spread the fabrications broadcast and created a prejudice against a government which was so persistently and skilfully maligned. What rendered this propaganda of defamation the more damaging to the Transvaal was the circumstance that there was a modicum of fact and of foundation at the bottom of the Uitlander charges. Just as a lie that is half a truth is, on that account, the worst kind of falsehood to re-

fute, so were these accusations against the Republic rendered more damaging than if they were mere baseless inventions.

The Transvaal Government was far from being an ideal Commonwealth, and its laws were not free from defects. The best friends of the Boer cause admitted these shortcomings, and were advocates of reform, but the crusade of lies carried on by the capitalist newspapers was in no way justified by the actual facts of Transvaal laws and administration.

The greatest thinker of our time, himself an Englishman of unquestioned patriotism, raised his powerful voice against the systematic hounding down of the little Republic by prejudiced critics on the score of its alleged reactionary tendencies. Writing to the chairman of an English meeting, Mr. Herbert Spencer, the great philosopher, has said :

" Has there been prepared and published a comparison between the Constitution and doings of the so-called Boer oligarchy, and the Constitution and doings of the English oligarchy before the Reform Bill ? It would embrace, among other items :

" 1. England: Permanent exclusion from the franchise of the greater part of the population, tho of the same blood.

" 1. Transvaal: Temporary exclusion from the franchise of a moiety of the population consisting of aliens.

" 2. England: The corn monopoly, maintained by the whole of the landed classes for the benefit of their cause; semi-starvation of the poor.

" 2. Transvaal: The dynamite monopoly, said to be maintained by the Boer oligarchy for personal ends at the cost of a sprinkling of greedy capitalists.

" 3. England: The determination of the landed classes to maintain their monopoly, constitutional and material, over crime only by the danger of revolution.

" 3. Transvaal: The much smaller opposition to reform on the part of the ruling classes in the Transvaal.

" 4. England: The corruption set down in the Black Book familiar in pre-Reform days.

" 4. Transvaal: The corruption ascribed to the Boer oligarchy."
—(London " Daily News," September 27, 1900.)

The comparison which Mr. Herbert Spencer has suggested between Transvaal laws and government may, however, be partly made, not with what obtained in the England of thirty or forty years ago, but with the very England which has attempted to justify this war for, among other reasons, the alleged " oligarchical " character of the Boer Volksraad and government, and the reactionary nature of their legislation. The following twelve points of comparison between present England and the Boer Transvaal when

hostilities broke out on the 11th of October, 1899, will further illustrate the glaring inconsistency of the British authors of the war.

COMPARISON OF ENGLISH AND BOER GOVERNMENTS

PRESENT ENGLAND	THE TRANSVAAL OF 1899
1. An hereditary monarchy. The people have no voice in the selection of the head of the State.	1. A Republic. The President elected every seven years by manhood suffrage.
2. Legislature: A House of Lords absolutely independent of the people's votes. Can veto all legislation without having to undergo an ordeal of election.	2. A Volksraad of two Chambers, both elective by the people on a franchise of burgher or manhood suffrage. No official election expenses incurred by candidates in contests for either Chamber.
A House of Commons elected by some 6,000,000 of voters in a population of some 40,000,000 (Great Britain and Ireland). Property and wealth have plural voting, and the cost of election expenses is so great that working men are all but debarred from membership of Parliament.	
3. Roll of Voters. Registration laws enable agents of the Tory or wealthy classes to disfranchise almost any number of voters by making objections and compelling working men and others to attend Registration Courts to sustain their claims. A voter must reside almost two years in a district before he can exercise a right to take part in an election.	3. Roll of Voters. No registration laws. All burghers arriving at the age of twenty-one and having their names inscribed on the Field Cornet's roll are entitled to vote in elections.
4. Members of Parliament are not paid, even for their postage. An expense of fully £200 a year is incurred by the most economical member in attending to his public duties for which he receives no compensation.	4. Members of both Volksraads were paid an average of £3 per day while engaged in Pretoria in attending to the legislative concerns of the Republic.
5. Referendum. No such law. Parliamentary elections every seventh year; but liable to take place more frequently.	5. Referendum. I have already alluded to this enlightened Boer law. In addition to the power thus recognized in the people, the elections for the Volksraad occurred every fourth year.
6. Taxation. Largely levied upon articles of consumption required by the masses of the people. Average daily wage of an ordinary British working man about 5s.	6. Taxation fell chiefly upon capital and weath. Workers were likewise taxed in necessaries, as in England, but the (Uitlander) working man in the Transvaal earned from 15s. to 25s. per day.
7. Land Laws. The land of England monopolized by the landlord, or aristocratic, class, who own the House of Lords and largely control	7. The Land Laws of the Transvaal have been already described. They favorably compare with the most enlightened laws of Europe.

the House of Commons, and, therefore, resist proposals of land reform which would interfere with their monopoly.

8. Land Tax. The land of England paid almost all the expense of government, up to the period of the Long Parliament. The landlords contracted subsequently to pay 4s. in the pound on the valuation of their estates. If this tax were paid to-day upon present valuation it would realize over £30,000,000 for the Exchequer. It is paid, however, on a valuation which is more than 150 years old, and only realizes about £900,000 annually.

8. The Transvaal Land Tax has been referred to. It fell equally on all owners of land, and contributed, in a small tax on each farm, to the revenues of the State. Absentee landowners had to pay double taxes.

9. Class Legislation. The present Government of England has carried two measures in the Parliament responsible for the war which openly benefited the land-owning classes at the expense of the common Exchequer. The English Agricultural Rating Act was an indirect gift of the supporters of Lord Salisbury's Government of £10,000,000 in a period of four years. The act was renewed again last year.

The Local, or County Government Act for Ireland passed in 1898 provided for the Irish landlord supporters of the Ministry by relieving them of rates and taxes on their property amounting to about £300,000 a year.

9. The various charges made by the Uitlander enemies of the Boers against the Volksraad, but not proved. I deal with these allegations in the next chapter.

10. Pauperism. Every fortieth person in the population of England is a pauper. About one out of every seven working men over the age of 60 in England dies an inmate of a workhouse.

10. There was no pauperism in the Transvaal. Relief was sometimes given to poor farmers when their crops were injured by locusts, but it was voted by the Volksraad for special reasons. The workhouse had no place in the social system of the Boers.

11. Drunkenness, Crime and Degradation. In 1899 over 200,000 persons were prosecuted for drunkenness in England and Wales.

In Part I. Criminal Statistics, 1899 (Parliamentary Blue Book), page 136, the following statistics of crime are given for that year: Murders, 121; convictions for same, 65, leaving 36 murders unpunished; attempted murders, 71; manslaughter, 201; felonious wounding, 259; malicious wounding, 1,001; rapes, indecent assaults on females, and defilement of young girls, 1,330;

11. There was little if any drunkenness in the Transvaal before the advent of the Uitlanders. Crime was very rare. There were no brothels except when introduced by the same foreign element. It is almost safe to say there was not a single house of ill fame in the Republic before the arrival of the Johannesburg "reformers" from England and her colonies.

unnatural offences, 200; bigamy, 115.

A report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children quoted from on p. 44, says that 10,790 children were "immorally outraged" in England and Wales, 307,904 "neglected and starved," 59,269 "assaulted and ill-treated," and that 7,686 were found to be "sufferers in other ways" since that society commenced its humane labors.

There were a total of 76,000 indictable offenses committed in England and Wales in 1899, for which crimes 53,359 persons were apprehended, leaving over 20,000 crimes unpunished.

There are supposed to be upward of 50,000 prostitutes in London alone, at the present time.

12. England's Army. This army, according to Rudyard Kipling, ought to be, or is, made up of brutes and gentlemen. Of the presence within it of the former, such conduct as that of the Lancers at Elandslaagte, and the reports of General Kitchener give ample evidence.

12. The Transvaal Army Officers are elected by the burghers. A National Militia composed of the best and most patriotic men in the Republic, and requiring no pay. Had the male population of England volunteered to fight in this war in the same proportion as Transvaal burghers did, no less than 3,000,000 Englishmen—not of the Kipling Tommy Atkins kind—would have asked for arms, without pay.

Chapter II

THE BOER "OLIGARCHY"

HYPOCRISY OF ENGLISH CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TRANSVAAL—COMPARISON OF KRUGER WITH THE RAND CAPITALISTS—PERSONNEL OF THE TRANSVAAL EXECUTIVE—SKETCHES OF KRUGER, JOUBERT, REITZ, CRONJE, KOCK, WOLMARANS, AND BURGER—NOBILITY OF BOER CHARACTER—TESTIMONY OF MR. FROUDE.

THE charges made against Mr. Kruger's Government—against what Mr. Chamberlain called a "foreign State" in 1896—were many and various. They may, however, be included in the dual allegation of "corrupt" and "incompetent." What the incompetence or even corruption of a "foreign State" had to do with the duties of a British Colonial Secretary, is not a question that appeared to trouble the minds of English critics. Yet, it is safe to say that, had France been guilty of the same responsible relationship as England with the Jameson Raid, and had the French Minister for the Colonies assumed the rights of intervention and of minatory advice claimed after that Raid by Mr. Chamberlain under the Convention of 1884, English opinion would have been unanimous in calling such intermeddling both unjustifiable and wrong.

In any case it would be asked, whether the charges of corruption and of incompetence were really true, or were but allegations founded upon a distortion of facts and an interested manipulation of circumstances creating suspicion but inconclusive in proof. Judgment would not be pronounced without the evidence of some supporting testimony, as is the rule with Englishmen when England is herself the judge of both her own and her adversary's case.

Men do not develop dishonest practises when in power, without some previous disposition or record which predisposes them to such an immoral misuse of authority. The honor of a high official position, the responsibilities of national duty, and the satisfaction of a great ambition are the rewards which follow from legitimate political success, and these, among undegenerate peoples, supply all-sufficient incentives for seeking political power. What is there in Mr. Kruger's career to sustain the theory of a corrupt misuse of the position to which his people had twice elected him? He has spent his life, not in money making, but in the noble task

of making a nation. Even his enemies bear evidence to his bravery; to his strong, if rugged, qualities as a leader; to his indomitable will and persistency of purpose, in this great task. Such a task or achievement would not be considered the ambition of a depraved nature or of an ignoble mind—if pursued, say, against French or German or Russian policy. Why, then, should it mean a low and mercenary motive only when England's Imperial interests are alone concerned?

Mr. Kruger's home in Pretoria was an ordinary cottage in one of the city's secondary streets. There were neither costly furnishings

PRESIDENT AND MRS. KRUGER IN THEIR COTTAGE IN PRETORIA, APRIL, 1900

within nor expensive display in the outside appearance of the Presidential residence. It would, probably, not compare in structural show or costliness with the house of Lord Salisbury's head gatekeeper at Hatfield. I can assert from actual observation and comparison that the difference between the President's home and the mansions built in Johannesburg by his chief traducers—the former penniless upstarts who made rapid fortunes under Mr. Kruger's Government—was as striking as that between an average bank clerk's dwelling and a squire's lordly hall in England. All the external evidences usually denoting wealth were wanting in the life, private and Presidential, of Mr. Kruger.

But it is alleged that he has accumulated great riches, whereas he was poor not many years ago. Here, again, is an instance of insinuation, and not a matter of established fact. But, even if true, why should it follow that such wealth was dubiously acquired? Mr. Alfred Beit was a clerk earning weekly wages in Hamburg, not many years ago. Mr. Cecil Rhodes possessed no riches when he exchanged the climate of England for that of the Kimberley region of South Africa. Members of the precious "Reform Committee" of Johannesburg were able to pay fines of £25,000 to the Transvaal Government, in expiation of a crime of high treason, and this after but a few years' sojourn on the Rand, tho they each and all arrived there in search of fortune with the proverbial shilling. Most of these persons are now multi-millionaires. All of them are welcomed into the highest London society; some of them being admitted, it is said, even to the companionship of British Royalty.

The gold of the Transvaal, which has made millionaires of Mr. Kruger's bitterest enemies, has also, doubtless, enriched the President and many of his friends. Mr. Kruger sold a farm, named Geduld, near Boxburg, in 1898, for £120,000. It is now worth millions to the purchasers. He divided the greater portion of the proceeds of this sale among his numerous children, gave certain sums to churches, and loaned £40,000 to the Transvaal Treasury on the very eve of the war—not a penny of which has yet been paid back. When leaving Lourenzo Marquez for Europe, in 1900, he took with him a sum of only £4,000.

Other Boers sold rich farms; the land of the Witwatersrand, now known to have covered the richest gold-reefs in the whole world, was owned by burghers, and was purchased from them by more fortunate speculators. Possibly Mr. Kruger has invested some of his money well and wisely. Rumor asserts that the late Queen Victoria's savings were similarly set aside. The President's salary was £7,000 a year, while his mode of living, simple and economical in keeping with his whole career, would not draw upon more than one-tenth of that salary annually. Here there is another evident source of accumulating wealth, which, when taken into account with the income already referred to, would explain the possession of riches, but of wealth fairly and honorably obtained in his own country.

The capitalists who had flocked to Johannesburg, and the upstart rich who had made rapid fortunes there, were not the masters of the statesmen and politicians of the little Africander nation. They could neither have laws made to suit their own interests and schemes, nor purchase a single seat in the Volksraad. They had tried and

failed.* Neither President Kruger, nor his Government, nor the Boer Legislature could be bribed or bought. Here was a state of things which could not be tolerated. England was dominated by landlords and money-mongers; America by Trusts; the Continent of Europe by Stock Exchanges and the Rothschilds; Australia by the Banks. But, the Transvaal was owned and ruled for Land and People! This was opposed to all "enlightened progress," the "welfare of humanity," and "true civilization"; and, therefore, "Down with the reactionary Boer!" became the watchword of that ardent champion of civil and religious liberty, the capitalist millionaire.

The Government of the Transvaal could have had the enthusiastic help and "loyalty" of the Echstein-Beit-Barnato combination of Rand "Reformers" at any time, if money were the sole and corrupt aim of its Administration. Obtainable bribes were there by the million, if sought for. Riches beyond the dreams of avarice could have been got by the President and the members of his Executive, if they had only consented to accommodate the machinery of Transvaal rule and laws to the requirements of the capitalist kings who controlled the Rand with a treasury of gold. These mine exploiters ruled the virtuous English Uitlanders completely and absolutely; purchased their leaders, "kept" their press, and subsidized their British loyalty, both in the "Reform" movement, and in the getting up of the precious petition to the Queen. These Anglicized German Jews did all this easily, and, as a matter of capitalistic business and policy, with the English population of Johannesburg and district. But they failed, in every attempt, to purchase, bribe, or exploit the Boer Executive.

It was pointed to, as a conclusive proof of Boer oppression in the taxation of Uitlanders, that a Transvaal revenue of £200,000, before the development of the Rand mines began, mounted to three or four million afterward. This is a sample of the arguments and of the "evidence" put forward by the paid traducers of the Republic to justify a war. But, if "evidence" of this kind and character proves "corruption" against one set of persons, it must stand for the same measure of moral guilt in others.

It was not an easy matter to discover in Johannesburg what were

* "In 1894 they (the capitalists) so far departed from their attitude of abstention as to give money to be used as an electioneering fund for the reform of the Raad. The Raad of 1895 was their experiment. The failure of the experiment was complete. No session in Transvaal history was more clearly disastrous to the interests of justice and good government than the session of 1895. During this session revolution was for the first time commonly talked of. During this session the capitalists came to the determination to espouse the popular cause, and from that moment revolution was inevitable." (The "Times" History of the War, Vol. I., p. 148.

the incomes of the leaders of the British Uitlanders when they first entered the Transvaal. It would have been a task akin to that of searching for the Highlander's breeks. These men soon became enormously rich; not under British, but under Boer rule. They were the accusers of the Government whose country and laws had enabled this wealth to be quickly and easily accumulated. Is it, then, to be contended that great riches, realized in a short time by mere exploiters, are a right and legitimate gain, and that the Government of the country, which, as steward for the State, was the virtual owner of the most valuable gold mines in the world, was not to benefit by the development of these mines? That was the Rand doctrine; the belief of the Echsteins, Wernhers, Beits, Barnatos, Phillipses, Goretzes, Neumanns, Rouillots, Eplers, Scholtzes, Birkenruths, Strakoshes, Solomons, Markses, Langermans, Albus, Goldmanns, Brakhauses, Morkels, Steylers, Lilienfelds, Nourses, Joels, Abrahams, Herchhorns, Ninds, Michaelises, Breitmeyers, Haarhoffs, Langes, Orpens, Raynhams, Harrises, Mosenthals, Bernheims, Dreyfusses, Peisers, Sutroes, Bonasses, Becks, Josephs, Anhaeussers, Grimmers, and Wybergs; and of the other "Englishmen" and "Reformers" who, with Mr. Cecil Rhodes, have succeeded in enforcing that doctrine by the arbitrament of war—at a cost to the British people of over £150,000,000 in taxes, and 30,000 lives.

The revenue of the Republic grew economically, as the wealth of the Transvaal was developed; as happens in every other country. It would have grown in similar proportions had Englishmen been its rulers; and it increased more legitimately under Boer administration than did the huge fortunes of the hostile strangers who had arrived almost penniless on the Rand.

THE TRANSVAAL EXECUTIVE

The Transvaal Executive preliminary to and during the early stages of the war, consisted of:

President S. J. Paulus Kruger
Commandant-General Piet J. Joubert
State Secretary F. W. Reitz
General Piet A. Cronje
Johannes Hermanus Michael Kock
Jacob Martin Wolmarans
Schalk William Burger

Of Mr. Kruger the world has formed its estimate, and it is not an unfavorable one outside of the British Empire. Like all men who are accounted great, he has his admirers and enemies, his laud-

atory eulogists and envenomed detractors. Had he struggled for a political lifetime against any other power than that of England, and had fought and damaged the military prestige of any other Empire as he has that of Great Britain, his present foes and vilifiers would have exhausted the English language in terms of unstinted praise, and would have ranked him in history as a fit compeer of Hampden, Washington, or Lincoln. But he has fought

J. M. Wolmarans F. W. Reitz Schalk William Burger J. H. M Kock

P. J. Joubert S. J. P. Kruger P. A. Cronje

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

England and humiliated her military pride, and he is, instead, a corrupt, cunning, hypocritical, and semi-savage foeman!

All who wish to err on the side of charity and of justice, rather than on the opposite side of injustice and malignity in their judgment of him, will accept the patriotic rather than the meaner estimate of the man. It is undoubtedly the more consistent with his whole career and character, and more in keeping with the view which unprejudiced minds have formed of him.

Mr. Kruger is and has always been a sincerely religious man.

All fair testimony on this point goes to establish this fact. His religious scruples have told, not once but often, against his own cause during this war. No stronger proof than this could be found in support of the general Boer belief in the piety of their President.

When in the summer of 1899 it became evident that Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy was making directly for war, some European

PRESIDENT KRUGER AND HIS GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, ANNIE ELOFF AND GERALD ELOFF

This picture was taken in 1900, for the Chicago "Tribune," shortly after President Kruger's arrival in Europe

officers of high repute offered to have one or two British transports, conveying British troops to South Africa, attacked by torpedo boats at certain points on the voyage. The plans were submitted to competent opinion, and were found to be perfectly feasible. The proposal was laid in due course before President Kruger, and instantly and emphatically rejected as "barbarous and unchristian."

During the earlier stages of the siege of Ladysmith, a plan for using dynamite in the task of forcing the British garrison out of

its entrenchments was put before Joubert, and discussed between himself and Kruger. Both condemned and rejected the scheme as "unchristian." No hypocrites would have harbored such objections. An unscrupulous politician, making an insincere profession and use of religion, would have had no more objection to the employment of torpedoes and the use of dynamite, under the circumstances, than English generals had to lyddite shells, and to the burning of De Wet's, and Botha's, and De la Rey's farms, and to the "concentration camps" for Boer women and children, as "civilized" methods of warfare. Whatever may be the ultimate judgment of Englishmen upon this old man's Bible reading and religious sincerity, many of his friends and admirers who know of his active interference, on Biblical and Scriptural grounds, with certain plans of younger Boer generals less scrupulous than himself and Joubert, will assign to President Kruger a part responsibility with the dead Commandant-General for the initial blunders of the Boer campaign.

Of General Joubert it is unnecessary to write in defense or in praise. Even English testimony to his chivalry and humanity—now that he is dead—is on record. He has earned the reluctant praise of his enemies, and their appreciation of his personal qualities and military capacity relieves his friends of the task of establishing his claim to a high and honorable reputation which is not denied by his foes.

State Secretary Reitz is an intense Boer Nationalist, a man of refinement and culture, a scholar and a poet. His popularity among the race to which he belongs has been shown in his presidency of the Free State, in the occupancy of the judicial bench, and, later, in the post in which it was his duty, ably assisted by the brilliant young Attorney-General, Mr. Smuts, now a gallant and successful Boer officer in the field, to enter the lists in diplomatic fencing with Sir Alfred Milner and Mr. Chamberlain. No impartial reader of the documents which followed the British Colonial Secretary's despatches in prompt and brilliant sequence of argument and refutation, in the correspondence which preceded the war, can fail to see the evidence of a virile intellect and of a master of a trenchant, controversial style in the presentation of the Transvaal case. Mr. Reitz clearly and conclusively upheld the justice of his cause, while pitilessly exposing the accusations and shuffling statements of the English Colonial Secretary.

At the outbreak of the war, Mr. Reitz's salary was £3,000. Soon after hostilities began—to be more accurate, on October 17, 1899—a decree of the Executive Council reduced all official salaries as follows: Salaries of £500, 35 per cent.; from £600 to £700, 40 per

cent.; and in like proportion up to salaries of £1,000; £1,000 to £1,200, 60 per cent.; £1,500 to £2,000, 70 per cent.; £2,000 to £3,000, 75 per cent.; salaries of £3,000 and above, 80 per cent.

All these sweeping reductions affected every member of the Executive and every official of the Government, from the President downward; the higher paid officers being called upon to sacrifice most in proportion to salary.

When Mrs. Reitz and her large family had to leave Pretoria on the entry therein of the British, her husband's whole financial resources could provide her only £300 with which to reach Holland. Mr. Reitz remained behind with the fighting burghers, and is sharing with them to-day the perils and privations of a "no surrender" courage and consistency in patriotic defense of Boer independence.

Reference has been made to the poetic taste and tendencies of Secretary Reitz. The first of the following parodies is said to be from his pen; I know, as a matter of fact, that he is the author of the second:

PROGRESSIONAL

(Dedicated to Mr. Mudyard Pipling)

Gods of the Jingo—Brass and Gold,
  Lords of the world by "Right Divine,"
Under whose baneful sway they hold
  Dominion over "Mine and Thine."
Such Lords as these have made them rotten,
They have forgotten—they have forgotten.

The Nigger or the Chinee dies,
  The Gladstones and the Pitts depart;
But "Bigger Englanders" arise
  To teach the world the Raiders' art.
Such Lords as these have made them rotten,
They have forgotten—they have forgotten.

They've "got the Gold, the Ships, the Men,"
  And are the Masters of To-morrow;
And so mankind shall see again
  The days of Sodom and Gomorrah.
These are the Lords that made them rotten,
They have forgotten—*they have* forgotten.

Drunken with lust of Power and Pelf,
  They hold nor man nor God in awe,
But care for naught but only Self,
  And cent. per cent.'s their only Law.
These are their Lords, for they are rotten.
They have forgotten—they have forgotten.

THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

(Pretoria, 17th March, 1900)

They tell me that good honest Pat,
  By favor of the Queen,
Has got the right—as well he might—
  To wearing of the Green.
Ah, Patrick Atkins, how your breast
  Must swell with pride and joy
To think that Mr. Chamberlain
  Has found his Irish boy!

Did we not hear, only last year,
  That on St. Patrick's Day
Denis Malone in "gaol" was thrown,
  And docked of all his pay,
Because—oh dreadful to relate—
  This "Soldier of the Queen"
Had with unblushing impudence
  Been wearing of the Green?

Now this great change is very strange,
  And sure it's puzzling quite,
That what was wrong for centuries long
  Should now at last be right!
And that the Dublin Fusiliers
  By all may now be seen
Without the fear of punishment
  A-wearing of the Green.

But if you say, now tell me pray,
  What may this difference "mane"?
Listen to me and you will see
  The matter is quite plain.
It means that Paddy now has got
  This "favor" from the Queen,
Becase—and that's a fact—becase
  He is—so very green!

General Piet Cronje is a prisoner in St. Helena. The world of military criticism has spoken its verdict on his courage and genius in the defensive combats which led up to his surrender at Paardeberg. Even English Jingo malignity has been silenced in his regard since he has written his name in more enduring characters in military history than any of the English generals who fought himself and his 4,000 famished farmers with 40,000 British soldiers and 100 guns.

General Kock, Secretary of the Executive Council, fought and lost the battle of Elandslaagte with 800 Boers against four times that number of British. He was one of the noblest types of living burgher freemen, and received at the hands of his sorrowing fellow-citizens in Pretoria funeral honors as great as those which marked the obsequies of General Joubert. Before the war Mr. Kock was popular alike with British residents and the ordinary citizens of the Transvaal, and has left an absolutely stainless record as a heritage to his family and the Boer nation.

It is notoriously known throughout Afrikanderdom that, as the handsome and stately looking Boer general lay wounded at Elandslaagte, after having made a gallant fight against overwhelming odds, he was stripped of his clothes and robbed of his watch and money, and left for over ten hours unattended on the battle-field.

Mr. Wolmarans was chosen five times in succession as non-official member of the Transvaal Executive Council. He is a Knight Commander of the Order of Orange Nassau. No charges have been made by the virtuous Johannesburg "Reformers" against this colleague of Oom Paul's in the government of the Republic. He is at present in Holland, as one of the Boer Delegates to Europe.

General Schalk Burger has fought in the war from its outbreak to the present hour. He has not been as successful in the field as other Boer generals, but he has shirked no duty or danger, and, tho Vice-President of the Republic, he has acted throughout the campaign in the spirit of a common burgher.

In the absence of Mr. Kruger in Europe, General Schalk Burger is the acting President of the Transvaal Republic.

These seven men were the Executive Council, or Government, of the South African Republic when war was declared. It was against their administration and country that the Echstein-Beit combination of Rand capitalists, in conjunction with the Chamberlain-Milner jingoism, engineered the war. How this administration faced the mighty conflict into which its members were driven, is now matter of history.

Of these members, two out of the seven have given their lives

for the Republic in the war. General Cronje is a prisoner in St. Helena. Mr. Reitz and General Schalk Burger are with the commandoes still in the field, while Mr. Wolmarans is in Europe.

Paul Kruger is in exile, and doomed to die there, after learning of the death of two of his sons on the field of battle, and of two more being prisoners of war. He was far removed from the devoted partner of his life, in their old age, and her death in Pretoria, separated from husband and children, is a subject which touches every true man's heart too closely for contemplation.

Thus lives, homes, children, and wealth have been sacrificed by the members of that Government which an ignoble gang of money-mongers calumniated in a reptile Rand and Cape Town press; but one will search in vain to find among the foemen of the Transvaal Executive in the field a single name of those who paid for the Jameson Raid, and who have succeeded in making the British tax-payer pay for the war which promises to be the successful supplement to that sordid and calculated crime.

Of the manly race who were ruled by Mr. Kruger's Government the world now needs to be told very little. They have made themselves the best-known people on earth, by their splendid patriotism, signal valor in the field, and a spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to National freedom without a single parallel in the story of mankind's struggles for liberty. They have lifted themselves by their deeds high above the racial level to which English calumny tried to lower them in the ranks of civilized nationhood. And, as the Boer people have been raised in universal esteem by the testimony of deeds nobly done, and of sufferings bravely borne during the last three years, the national character, the moral standards, and the military reputation of their unscrupulous foes have sunk correspondingly in the opinion of every civilized community outside of British shores.

Giving his impressions of the Boers in an interview with a reporter of a London paper ("The Evening News," December 1, 1884), the late Mr. Froude, the English historian, expressed himself as follows:

"First of all, I must tell you that I think very highly of the Boers. I found them in every instance to be honest, truthful, and God-fearing. Uncorrupted by our liberal civilization, they are content as quiet husbandmen to till the soil in South Africa, to raise cattle; in fact, to earn their living rather by hard work than by overreaching their neighbors, while bringing up their families in pious fashion. Morning and evening, servants and sojourners assemble with the family to hear a chapter in the Bible read, and in the prayer that follows this, all join devoutly enough. In all

my experience no Boer ever lied to me or prevaricated in any smallest particular.

"I wish I could say as much for our own countrymen in that quarter of the globe. The English settlers in South Africa appeared to me as miserable a set of good-for-nothings as ever I met. Given over body and soul to cants, wedded to humbugs, and averse from truth and honest labor, they could prate of their Attorneys-General, and become eloquent in regard to their 'constitootion'; but in all real faculty and manhood they compared badly with the Dutchmen."

There are no complex qualities in the Boer people. In one sense there is some truth in the saying of their enemies, that they are wanting in "civilization." They are; but it is in the "civilization" with which we are familiar in Anglo-Saxon countries—that of a godless culture, of refined vice, of divorce courts and immorality, of drunkenness and prostitution. The Boer is very backward in these modern customs, and is altogether lacking in the accomplishments which can conceal the worst appetites of an educated animalism beneath a simulated regard for propriety and religion.

The 130,000 men, women, and children of the Transvaal who were not afraid to fight the British Empire could not be nurtured on such a "civilization." They are the products of a hardy stock, made tougher and stronger in body and mind by the unique environment of their existence. The Boer is neither emotional nor magnetic in his temperament. He is deliberate in thought and in action and rarely influenced by passion; cool and calculating in all his acts, whether making a bargain in a market or a laager on a battle-field; rough in speech and manner, but capable of developed refinement when the training of education brings into play the latent mental forces of a robust and nimble intellect.

The Boers have a stronger attachment to land and the life which its ownership requires than any other civilized race. They possess that pride of personal independence which comes from a conscious lordship of the soil. They have not had to go through the social servitude of a rent-tenancy before reaching the natural dignity of a proprietor. The Boer is a land-owning democrat, owing no homage to any man or class, and feeling in his social independence and burghership of a free Republic that sense of equality and love of freedom which are the inherited and acquired national sentiment of his race. He has all the strong natural traits of a people reared away from the many debilitating influences of city life. He is abstemious when young, loyal to the obligations of marriage, affectionately attached to parents, devoted to the duties of domestic life, and naturally disposed to the social virtue of hospitality.

The Boer woman has all these natural virtues in even greater degree. She is strong in mind and body, and proud of her fidelity to the noblest functions of motherhood in the rearing of children, while being religious, chaste, and intensely patriotic. The Boer mother looks upon the English as the enemies of her race, and believes that no degradation could be greater for her children

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MRS. KRUGER HEARING FROM HER GRANDDAUGHTER, MISS NETTIE ELOFF, THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FRONT

than the position of paid soldier for her son or of house-servant for her daughter under British rule.

Their experiences of British dealings with South Africa have tended to make the Boers unsociable towards other races. The English are to them the exemplars of modern ways and ideas. They see drunkenness and immorality following in the footsteps of their power, whether in its inroads upon Dutch life or communities, or

in its effects upon native races. They look upon the English as mammonized, godless, and unscrupulous, and consider that their example and customs are destructive of that moral manliness which the Boer mother inculcates in her children as the true guardian of their country's religion and of its independence.

The average Boer is a man of strong physique, above the European build, sinewy in structure, and capable of almost any endurance. His out-of-door daily existence; his personal pride in the management of a horse and in the use of a rifle; the acquired alertness of movement and accuracy of eyesight which are bred of his veldt life, with its varied herding, hunting, and health-giving occupations, have all combined to mold the men who have fought the best fight for freedom of which human history gives us a record. They are to-day showing the world, by their capacity and their measureless sacrifices for liberty, their preeminent claim over the British to the permanent and paramount right of nationhood in South Africa. And this right their virile and prolific land-loving race are yet destined, by the laws of fitness and of nature, to vindicate and enjoy.

Chapter III

WHO PROVOKED THE WAR?

THE BRITISH CONTENTION EXAMINED—PRETEXTS FOR INTERVENTION—UITLANDER "GRIEVANCES"—CAPTAIN MARCH PHILLIPS' DESCRIPTION OF THESE "WRONGS"—HOW AND WHY THEY WERE MANUFACTURED IN JOHANNESBURG—ENGLAND DEBARRED BY THE LONDON CONVENTION FROM INTERFERING IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF THE TRANSVAAL—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ADMISSIONS—PRESIDENT KRUGER'S CONCESSIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF WAR—THE PERFIDY OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ULTIMATUM OF THE 22ND OF SEPTEMBER—THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT SUMMONED TO MEET AND THE RESERVES CALLED OUT—MR. KRUGER'S "ULTIMATUM"—REPEATED EFFORTS OF THE TRANSVAAL TO SUBMIT ALL MATTERS IN DISPUTE WITH ENGLAND TO ARBITRATION—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S CONSTANT REFUSAL—ENGLAND PREVENTS THE ADMISSION OF TRANSVAAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE HAGUE CONFERENCE—EVIDENCE OF ENGLAND'S PREPARATIONS FOR WAR IN 1887—LORD WOLSELEY'S EFFORT TO HAVE WAR DECLARED IN JUNE, 1899—LORD LANSDOWNE'S ASTOUNDING ADMISSIONS—THE BRITISH AGENT AT PRETORIA THREATENED WAR IN AUGUST—"WAR FOR MATTER OF FORM"—THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S CONFESSION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—MR. HERBERT SPENCER'S CONDEMNATION OF THE POLICY PURSUED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

THE one fact upon which the English base the assertion that the Boers were the first to declare war, rests upon what has been called Mr. Kruger's "ultimatum." This would be an unassailable position, and would conclusively establish the innocence of Great Britain if Mr. Kruger's despatch of the 9th of October, 1899, stood in the controversy as a solitary factor of provocation. We know that it bore no such character.

In all contentions, whether between individuals or States, a knowledge of previous occurrences directly bearing upon the conduct or explanatory of the motives of the parties to the dispute, is essential to the formation of a fair judgment. The question, "who provoked the war," cannot be answered rightly without taking into account the events which led up to it and compelled the Boer Executive, "to push back the sword which was held to their throats," to use the graphic phrase employed by President Steyn in his letter to Lord Kitchener. The most cursory examination of a few notorious facts will prove that the real ultimatum which made the war inevitable was resolved upon and issued in London, and not in Pretoria.

The story of England's treatment of the Boer race from 1806 to 1896, as told by General Joubert in his letter to Queen Victoria —the usurpation of Cape Colony, the seizure of Natal, the grabbing of the Free State, and the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877—has some little bearing upon the charge against the same Power that she deliberately provoked the present war in the spirit of persistent, national animosity towards the same people, and for the same predatory purposes which have inspired and directed British policy against them for a hundred years. England comes into court as the violator of solemn treaties, and with her Empire in South Africa actually covering the very territories which she had violently and fraudulently seized from the race who had settled and civilized them. Weighted down with the very proofs of her own past culpability, she innocently asks a jury of civilized public opinion to believe her when she declares, "President Kruger began the present war in his ultimatum of the 9th of October, 1899!"

S. J. PAULUS KRUGER, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Let us see: The Jameson Raid of 1896, engineered and paid for by a British Colonial Prime Minister, connived at by the British Colonial Office, and actually carried out by officers holding commissions in the British army, was an act of war. The object of this criminal enterprise was to overthrow the Transvaal Republic and to obtain possession of the fabulously rich Rand Mines. It did not succeed, and the magnanimity of the Boers in sparing the lives of the captured freebooters who attempted the seizure, stands out in signal contrast to the action of the vindictive executioners of the brave and gallant Commandants Lotter and Scheepers, who were captured in British territory while engaged in legitimate warfare.

Of the Uitlander conspiracy which succeeded the Raid—financed and directed by the very capitalists who promoted the Jameson plot—it is quite unnecessary to speak at any length. Its objects were obvious to the Transvaal Government and to all who followed with any attention the movement for "the redress of the

intolerable grievances" of the German Jews and the cosmopolitan adventurers which was carried on by the paid agents of Messrs. Rhodes, Beit, Echstein and Company in Johannesburg. One comment upon the "grievances" thus manufactured by a subsidized press—the honest and manly view of an upright British soldier who had been conversant with the whole situation in Johannesburg—will be enough to lay bare the hollow mockery, and the mercenary and mendacious character, of the movement upon the existence of which Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner grounded their pretext for a policy of war.

Captain March Phillips, in his book "With Rimington," (London, Edward Arnold, publisher, 1901, pp. 105, 106) writing, both as a Uitlander and an English officer who had fought in the war, says:

"As for the Uitlanders and their grievances, I would not ride a yard or fire a shot to right all the grievances that were ever invented. The mass of Uitlanders (i.e. the miners and working men of the Rand) had no grievances. I know what I am talking about, for I have lived and worked among them. I have seen English newspapers passed from one to another, and roars of laughter roused by the 'Times' telegrams about these precious grievances. We used to read the London papers *to find out what our grievances were;* and very frequently they would be due to causes of which we had never even heard. I never met one miner or working man who would have walked a mile to pick the vote up off the road, and I have known and talked with scores and hundreds. And no man who knows the Rand will deny the truth of what I tell you.

"No; the Uitlanders the world has heard of were not these, but the Stock Exchange operators, manipulators of the money market, company floaters, and gamblers generally, a large percentage of them Jews. They voiced Johannesburg, had the press in their hands, worked the wires, and controlled and arranged what sort of information should reach England. As for the grievances, they were a most useful invention, and have had a hand in the making of many fortunes. It was by these that a feeling of insecurity was introduced into the market which would otherwise have remained always steady; it was by these that the necessary and periodic slump was brought about. When the proper time came, 'grievances,' such as would arrest England's attention and catch the ear of the people, were *deliberately invented.*"

Mr. Chamberlain's demand for such an extension of the franchise as would give to the Uitlanders thus described the virtual control of the Transvaal Government, was in every way worthy of the motives and morals of the very men and agencies by whom the Jameson Raid, for the same end, had been organized. It was

PRESIDENT KRUGER AT PRETORIA

cynical in its effrontery to the last degree of shameless audacity. For, apart from the patent hypocrisy of the demand, what were the fundamental rights of the Republic which these oppressed capitalist conspirators wanted to override?

The same Mr. Chamberlain, speaking in the House of Commons on the 8th of May, 1896, five months after the Jameson invasion of the Transvaal, clearly laid down the limits within which British intervention in the domestic affairs of the Republic were confined by the London Convention of 1884. He said:

"We do not claim, and never have claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The rights of our action under the Convention are limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce."

There is no ambiguity about this language of the Colonial Secretary. It was his belief and declaration then that England would have as much right to insist upon a reform of the franchise in behalf of her subjects in the South African Republic, as she would to make a demand of a similar nature upon the Government of Holland. Yet, what happened ?

At the Bloemfontein conference between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner—a conference suggested with sinister aim by Mr. Chamberlain—the British High Commissioner demanded a five years' residential franchise for the alien population of the Transvaal. This, Mr. Kruger refused, and from that moment it became evident that Milner's policy of provocation would be to insist upon a reform which he believed the President would not concede, and the refusal of which on his part could be represented as a proof of Boer antagonism to England's "friendly counsel" and of a spirit of oppression towards the suffering Uitlanders.

Mr. Kruger, however, changed his attitude when it became apparent to him what the true meaning of the Milner proposal was. He, therefore, offered, on the 19th of August, 1899, the five years' franchise which Milner had put forward at Bloemfontein. This proposal was made as a concession to his enemies to prevent the armed intervention for which the English war press was already clamoring. It was the choice between two evils, and was as great a sacrifice as any State could possibly make, with any due regard to its own rights and independence, in the hope of averting the crime of war. It was, however, of no avail with the representatives of that Power which had behind it the South African record of Great Britain, and saw within its reach the gold-fields of the Rand.

In addition to the five years' franchise, the Boer Executive also

proposed a reference of all the matters in dispute between the two Governments to an arbitral tribunal, which might be composed, exclusively, of English, Colonial, or Boer members, and whose President or Umpire should likewise be English, Colonial, or Boer.

"These offers," wrote Mr. Conyngham Greene, the British Agent at Pretoria, "I promised to recommend to you (the Colonial Secretary) for acceptance by Her Majesty's Government in return for waiving the proposal of a joint inquiry." (*Blue Book, C. 9518, August, 1899, p. 45.*)

On the 26th of August, Mr. Chamberlain delivered a violent speech against the Transvaal at Highbury, and made no reference either to President Kruger's concession of the Milner franchise proposal, the offer to submit the whole question in dispute to arbitration, or to Mr. Greene's recommendation that these offers of a peaceful settlement should be accepted by England.

On the 31st of August Sir Alfred Milner cabled from Cape Town that "British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures."

On the 22nd of September Mr. Chamberlain addressed a despatch to the Transvaal Government breaking off all negotiations, and announcing that the British Government "will formulate their own proposals for a final settlement." (*Blue Book, C. 9521, p. 17.*)

The entire press of England declared this despatch of the Colonial Secretary's to be the "ultimatum" of Her Majesty's Government. Preceding the receipt of this real ultimatum at Pretoria, State Secretary Reitz had addressed a communication to Mr. Conyngham Greene, on the 16th of September, in which he said:

"This Government wishes to state that it learns with a feeling of deep regret that it must understand that Her Majesty's Government withdraws from this invitation sent in your letter of the 23rd of August, and accepted by this Government, and substitutes in its place an entirely new proposal. . . . The proposal which has now lapsed was induced by suggestions given by the British Agent to the Transvaal State Attorney, and these were accepted by this Government in good faith and on express request, as equivalent to an assurance that the proposal would be acceptable to Her Majesty's Government." (*Blue Book, C. 9521, p. 12.*)

On September 25 the English army headquarters in Natal were removed from Ladysmith north to Dundee, nearer the Transvaal border.

On October 3 the British Parliament was officially summoned for a special session.

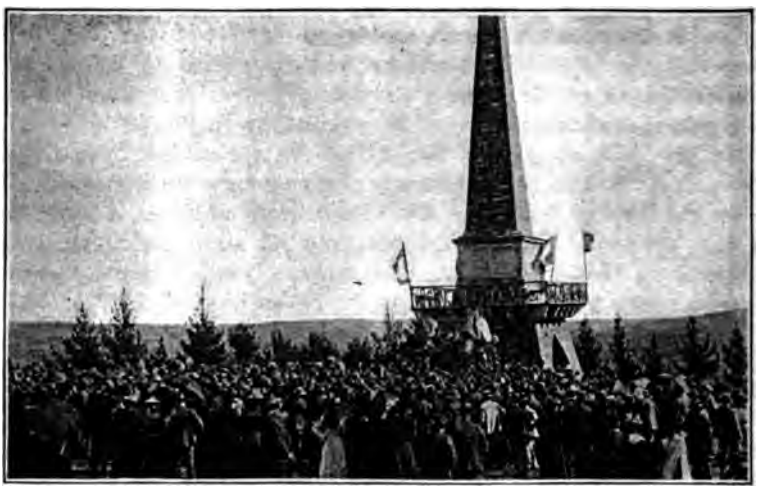
On October 7 the British Army Reserves were called out.

On October 9 Mr. Kruger's "ultimatum" was delivered!

In face of this record of undeniable facts, Lord Salisbury and the apologists of the crime for which his Ministry will be forever made responsible in history, still declare, "The Boers began it!"

One or two more facts may not be out of place in further refutation of this truly impudent allegation.

From 1897 until the 9th of October, 1899, President Kruger pleaded for a reference of all matters in dispute between the Republic and Great Britain to arbitration. Again and again this proposal was pressed both by Dr. Leyds, when State Secretary,



THE BOER MEETING AT PAARDEKRAAL, AT WHICH IT WAS DECIDED TO STAND FIRM AGAINST ENGLAND

and subsequently by Dr. Reitz, in behalf of the Boer Government. With equal persistence Mr. Chamberlain refused to submit the English case to any such tribunal. Not alone did this refusal obtain, but, when the Transvaal asked for admittance to The Hague Conference to participate in the labors of promoting peaceful arbitration as a substitute when possible for the arbitrament of war, Great Britain objected, and, we have it upon the recent declaration of M. Bourgeois, a prominent French delegate, that England gave the representatives of the other Powers the choice between a British or a Boer attendance at the Conference.

In the secret document found upon a wounded British officer at Dundee, which was shown to me by the Transvaal Government in Pretoria, and from which I largely quote in a succeeding chapter, it is made evident that war had been decided upon by England as

far back as 1887, and that plans were being prepared in that year for the advance of a British army through both the Free State and the Transvaal. By June, 1899, these plans were matured; at least in the belief of Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief of the British army, as the following evidence will show:

On the 15th of March, 1901, Lord Lansdowne, speaking in the House of Lords, made this candid and astounding admission :

"He (Lord Wolseley) wished us to mobilize an army corps. He suggested to us that we might occupy Delagao Bay. . . . I would remind him that he pressed these measures upon me, as he says, in the month of June (1899) with the expression of his desire that the operations might begin as soon as possible. Why? In order that we might get the war over before the month of November, 1899. My lords, the idea of forcing the pace in such a manner as to complete the subjugation of the two Republics by the month of November, 1899, was, I frankly confess, one that did not at all commend itself to Her Majesty's Government. But do not let it be supposed that all this time we were sitting with our hands folded! . . . We earnestly desired to have the country with us. We believe the country was not ready for war in the months of June and July, 1899."

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DR. WILLEM JOHANNES LEYDS

No ! England was not ready for the war in June, 1899, but Mr. Chamberlain believed she was fully prepared for the conflict when he broke off negotiations with the Transvaal on the 22nd of the following September. And yet the Government whose War Secretary made the above statement, and whose Colonial Secretary issued the ultimatum of September, 1899, now want a world which has read both to believe that it was Mr. Kruger's despatch of October 9th which must be held responsible for the hostilities that followed!

In August, 1899, the British Agent in Pretoria, in a conversation with Attorney-General Smuts, said: "Her Majesty's Government, who had given pledges to the Uitlanders, would be bound to assert their demands and, if necessary, to press them by force."

In fact, the choice presented to the Transvaal by England's

representatives was one between a five years' franchise and war, with the obvious resolve on the part of the Power which had signed the Sand River, Aliwal North, and London Conventions, to force a conflict upon the little Republic, franchise or no franchise. This resolve is removed from the category of all doubt by Mr. Chamberlain's own admissions.

On the 19th of October, 1899—eight days after war had been declared—the historic encounter between the Colonial Secretary and Sir Edward Clarke occurred in the House of Commons. The (then) member for Plymouth argued that the war could have been, and should have been, avoided, owing to the extent of the concessions made to the British demands by the Transvaal Executive, and continued as follows:

"*Sir Edward Clarke*—'The extraordinary incident that has marked the proceedings of this evening has been the statement of the Colonial Secretary that the answer to that proposal (i.e., the five years' franchise proposal) might have been taken as an acceptance. That was the phrase he used, but it is an ambiguous phrase, and I should like to know—Was that answer intended as an acceptance?'

"*Mr. Joseph Chamberlain*—'At that time we thought the proposal of the Transvaal extremely promising. We intended to send a most conciliatory answer, accepting, as far as it was humanly possible for us to do so, their proposal, and, as the only point of difference was the internal intervention, I thought myself it would be accepted.'

"*Sir E. Clarke*—'Then I take it that it was intended to be an acceptance of that proposal. Now, Mr. Speaker, if that were so, if, in fact, the Colonial Secretary intended to accept the proposals of the Transvaal, then undoubtedly this amendment is proved up to the hilt.'

. . . . . .

"*Mr. J. Chamberlain*—'The honorable member harps upon the word "acceptance." He must remember he asked me the question whether we intended to accept. I, myself, should have thought that the Boers would have taken it as an acceptance, but I suppose it may be properly described as a qualified acceptance. We did not accept everything, but we accepted at least nine-tenths of the whole.'

"*Sir E. Clarke*—'Really, this becomes more and more sad. It is dreadful to think of a country of this kind entering upon a war, a crime against civilization, when this sort of thing has been going on. Why, in the very next sentence, the right honorable gentleman says: "It is on this ground that her Majesty's Government have been compelled to regard the last proposal of the Government of the South African Republic as unacceptable in the form in which it has been presented."'

"*Mr. J. Chamberlain*—'In the form.'
"*Sir E. Clarke*—'Is it a matter of form?'
"*Mr. J. Chamberlain*—'Yes.'"
—(*Hansard, pp. 307-311, 1st Vol., Autumn Session, 1899.*)

In other words, a week after hostilities had begun the statesman who had succeeded in forcing war upon the Transvaal confessed that this "crime against civilization" was resorted to on account of "a matter of form"! It was thus that England precipitated a combat which she had obviously determined upon from the very commencement; despite all her hollow professions in favor of peace, and dishonest demands for franchise concessions.

This conduct, as represented by the language and threats of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner throughout the whole negotiations, provoked the following censure and judgment from the greatest of living philosophers and thinkers. Writing to Mr. Leonard Courtney, M. P., Mr. Herbert Spencer said:

"I rejoice that you and others are bent on showing that there are some among us who think the national honor is not being enhanced by putting down the weak. Would that age and ill-health did not prevent me from aiding.

"No one can deny that at the time of the Jameson Raid the aim of the Uitlanders and the raiders was to usurp the Transvaal Government, and he must be wilfully blind who does not see that what the Uitlanders failed to do by bullets they hope presently to do by votes; and only those who, while jealous of their own independence, regard but little the independence of people who stand in their way, can fail to sympathize with the Boers in their resistance to political extinction.

"It is sad to see our Government backing those whose avowed policy is expansion, which, less politely expressed, means aggression, for which there is still a less polite word readily guessed. On behalf of these the big British Empire, weapon in hand, growls out to the little Boer Republic, 'Do as I bid you!'

"I have always thought that nobleness is shown in treating tenderly those who are relatively feeble, and even sacrificing on their behalf something to which there is a just claim. But if current opinion is right I must have been wrong.—Yours truly,

"HERBERT SPENCER."

Chapter IV

THE BOER AT BAY

THE KRUGER "ULTIMATUM"—THE LOYALTY OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE—ITS CHIVALROUS RESOLVE TO STAND BY THE TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC—THE BRITISH DECLARATION OF WAR.

IMMEDIATELY following the Privy Council meeting on the 6th of October, a Royal Proclamation was issued in London authorizing the calling out of the First Class Army Reserves. A similar order was published for the mobilization of a full field force for South Africa. The "terms of settlement" which the Colonial Secretary declared would be submitted by his Government in due course were plainly indicated to the Transvaal by the nature and purpose of these Royal Proclamations. These were England's virtual declaration of war against the independence of the South African Republic.

This open abandonment of peaceful measures, by a Power which had so often previously violated its pledges and torn up Conventions, left no alternative to the menaced Republic but a resolve to meet force by force. President Steyn, in his despatch to Sir Alfred Milner on the 5th of October, indicated plainly what the two Republics required from the British Government as a proof of the sincerity of its professed desire for a peaceful ending of the crisis; a desire which the High Commissioner took the trouble to reiterate on the very eve of the mobilization of a full field force for South Africa, and of the calling out of the Reserves.

The President of the Orange Free State wrote:

"I consider it would not be practicable to induce the Government of the South African Republic to make or entertain (further) proposals or suggestions unless not only the troops menacing their State are withdrawn further from their borders, but that an assurance be given by her Majesty's Government that all further despatch and increase of troops will at once and during the negotiations be stopped, and that those now on the water should either not be landed or, at least, should remain as far removed as can be from the scene of possible hostilities. . . . If so, I would be prepared to take steps at once to try and obtain any needful assurance

to safeguard against any act of invasion or hostility any portion of her Majesty's colonies or territories, pending the negotiations."

This offer was not accepted.

On Monday, the 9th of October, the Transvaal Government put President Steyn's reply to Sir Alfred Milner in the form of a final despatch to the Ministers of the Queen of England. The document was handed to Mr. Conyngham Greene on the afternoon of that day, and an irrevocable step was thus taken in the fate of the Republic.

M. T. STEYN, PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE

The civilized world almost held its breath on reading the terms of Mr. Kruger's communication. "This Government," wrote State Secretary Reitz, "feels bound to insist on the British Government immediately ending the tension, and giving an assurance:

"1. That all debatable points shall be settled by arbitration, or in a peaceful manner agreed upon;

"2. That the troops on the border shall be withdrawn immediately.

"3. That all reenforcements since the 1st of June shall be removed to the coast, and thence removed in a reasonable time to be agreed upon, and mutual undertakings given against warlike acts during negotiations; and

"4. That troops on sea shall not be landed.

"The Republic's Government insist on an immediate affirmative reply before Wednesday, 11th October, at five o'clock in the evening.

"If no reply arrives the Republic will consider it as a formal declaration of war, and act.

"In the meantime if troops are moved nearer the border this also will be considered a formal declaration of war."

Many external friends of the Boer cause deeply regretted the wording of this despatch. They looked upon it as playing into the hands of Mr. Chamberlain and of the English war party. Doubtless it did. So would a continuation of useless proposals and negotiations, only more so. The due formulation of Mr. Chamberlain's

terms of settlement would have meant such a convenient delay as would have enabled England to place 50,000 more troops in transports for South Africa, with which to enforce the Colonial Secretary's purpose. President Kruger acted boldly, and thereby acted wisely, remembering the perfidious foe with whom he had to deal. It was a question with him, whether he should draw England's fire before she had quadrupled her soldiers in South Africa, or wait until the borders of the Free State and Transvaal were occupied by forces powerful enough to back up an imperative demand for impossible concessions with an overwhelming army of invasion. He acted with judgment and with rare courage in resolving to face the ordeal of actual conflict sooner than later, knowing as he did hostilities were inevitable, and that England would only hold her hand until she had force enough in the field with which to strike for the prize and the revenge for which she hungered.

F. W. REITZ, STATE SECRETARY OF SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Sir Alfred Milner made a demand upon President Steyn for a declaration of the attitude of the Free State in view of the terms contained in the Transvaal despatch, and the following dignified and courageous reply was forwarded to Cape Town from Bloemfontein, on the 11th of October:

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's telegram of this evening. The high-handed and unjustifiable policy and conduct of her Majesty's Government in interfering with and dictating in the purely internal affairs of the South African Republic, constituting a flagrant breach of the Convention of London, accompanied at first by preparations for, and latterly followed by, the active commencement of hostilities against that Republic, which no friendly and well-intentioned efforts on our side could induce her Majesty's Government to abandon, constitutes such an undoubted and unjust attack on the independence of the S. A. Republic that no other course is left to this State than honorably to abide by its Conventional engagement entered into with that Republic. On behalf of this Government, therefore, I beg to notify that, compelled

thereto by the action of her Majesty's Government, they intend to carry out the instructions of the Volksraad as set forth in the last part of the resolution referred to by your Excellency."

The action of the Free State in resolving to throw in its lot with the desperate fortunes of the Transvaal has been variously criticised. President Steyn has been blamed by one trend of opinion, and lauded by another. It has been urged, in condemnation of the course which he took, that his action was one of supreme folly in inviting the certain destruction of his country's independence by voluntarily taking the field against the forces of the British Empire. This, however, is the comment of a soulless selfishness, regardless of national honor. It is also a view that has been urged by journals and men on the British side who have lauded to the skies the egregious and gratuitous jingoism of Canada and the Australias in offering, on account of racial ties, to fight for England against so small a foe. Blood is only "thicker than water" when it flows from an Anglo-Saxon source. President Steyn and his burghers were neither deaf to the appeal of racial kinships nor blind to the motives which animated and the purposes which inspired the authors of the war. They nobly responded to the stern duties contracted in the Treaty of 1897, and in doing so exhibited to a grossly selfish age and to the capitalist-ridden governments of Europe an example of exalted statesmanship and of chivalrous self-sacrifice in the cause of liberty which will earn for them to all time the grateful admiration of every mind that can differentiate between the brigand aims of modern Imperialism and the nobler spirit and mission of Nationality.

Altho no member of the Transvaal Executive had any doubt as to the reply which the British Government would return to the message of the 9th, it was with a feeling of suppressed excitement that President Kruger, Mr. Reitz, and Mr. A. D. Wolmarans heard the door-keeper of the Executive Chamber announce "Mr. Conyngham Greene" early on the afternoon of the 11th of October. The British Agent shook hands with the Executive members, and handed his fateful message to the State Secretary. The document read as follows:

"H. M.'s Agency,
"Pretoria, October 11th, 1899.

"Sir—I am instructed by the High Commissioner to state to you that her Majesty's Government have received with great regret the peremptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic conveyed to me in your note of the 9th instant, and I am to inform you in reply that the conditions demanded by the

Government of the South African Republic are such as her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss.—I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"W. CONYNGHAM GREENE, C.B."

PRESIDENT STEYN AT BLOEMFONTEIN

There was a moment's deep silence in the room, after which the courteous medium of England's haughty message was told in respectful terms that the note just delivered would be considered as a declaration of war. Mr. Greene bowed his head, and with-

drew, after having requested that his passport should be prepared without delay. After England's representative had left the Council Chamber, the aged President inclined his head for a few moments in silent prayer, and then attached his signature to the document which was to give Mr. Greene safe passage through the territory of the Transvaal Republic.

Within an hour after this memorable interview and scene, a word was flashed over the wires of the two Republics from Pretoria—a single word—to every Landrost in every district, and to each officer in command of burghers along the Natal and the Western borderlands. The word was "War," and from that time forth the Boers of the two little nations loaded their Mausers, and stood at bay.

At six o'clock the same evening the President of the Free State caused a "Gazette Extraordinary" to be issued, in which an impassioned appeal to the sister Republic was published, calling upon its burghers to stand by their brethren across the Vaal in their hour of danger against "the oppressor and violator of justice." President Steyn further said :

"In carrying on this struggle let no single action of yours be otherwise than such as becomes a Christian and a burgher of the Free State. Let us look forward with confidence to a successful issue to that struggle, trusting in a Higher Power, without whose support no human weapons avail anything. To the God of our forefathers we humbly submit the justice of our cause. May He protect the right, may He bless our arms. Under His banner do we draw the sword for freedom and for Fatherland."

On learning of the nature of England's reply to the last demand for arbitration, President Steyn telegraphed to Pretoria, "We are ready!"

Chapter V

TRANSVAAL PREPARATIONS

THE SALISBURY GOVERNMENT'S SUPPRESSION OF THE TRUTH—THEIR "IGNORANCE" OF BOER ARMAMENTS—A WAR OFFICE SECRET DOCUMENT EXPOSES THE FALSITY OF MINISTERIAL ASSERTIONS—THE EXTENT AND CHARACTER OF BOER ARMAMENTS—WHEN AND WHERE RIFLES, GUNS, AND AMMUNITION WERE PURCHASED—THE STRENGTH OF BOER FIELD FORCES KNOWN TO THE ENGLISH WAR OFFICE IN JUNE, 1899.

THE actual strength of the Federal fighting forces, and the extent and character of their military equipment, were subjects of keen public interest after war had been declared. President Kruger's preparations were an unknown quantity outside of the knowledge of the Transvaal Executive—except to the British War Office. The English press resorted freely to conjecture, and placed the number of burghers, guns, and Mausers at General Joubert's disposal, at the particular figure which the argument of the occasion required. When the conviction was widespread in England that General Buller would march to Pretoria after a two months' campaign, the opposing Boer force was deemed to be anything between 15,000 and 30,000 men. After the defeats inflicted on the English armies at Dundee, Modderspruit, Magersfontein, and Colenso, the English estimate of the Boer armies ranged from 50,000 to 120,000 burghers, with 5,000 foreigners. The Boers were also found after the first engagement to be in possession of an artillery which outclassed that of their foes, and it was confidently asserted that these guns had been worked by trained artillerists from Germany, France, and Holland, numbering at least 300 skilled gunners.

The plea put forward by the English press in explanation of these defeats was the double one of want of due preparation for such a conflict on the part of the English War Office, and the surprising extent and character of the Federal equipment in both men, guns, and ammunition. This plea was universally accepted in England, and, to a great extent, abroad, as an explanation of the humiliating reverses suffered by England's best generals and troops during the first few weeks of the war. This explanation did not stop at that point. The Boer preparations were made to es-

tablish something more than a reason why Yule, White, Methuen, Buller, and Gatacre had been beaten back in British territory by the Federal generals. It was declared to be a proof that there had been "a Dutch conspiracy" to oust the British from South Africa, and that in pursuance of this purpose Transvaal arming must have been carried on for years anterior to the Jameson Raid. All this was a comforting discovery for the Jingo authors of the war. "Did we not tell you so?" was the cry of both capitalist and Jingo organs, and the hesitating qualms of conscience which had feebly protested in some English minds against the war as unnecessary, or as being promoted by the Rhodes-Johannesburg combination, gave way before this conclusive demonstration of Dutch deception.

The Government of Lord Salisbury, both in and out of Parliament, connived at the creation of this conviction in the popular mind. It was important also to encourage this impression with reference to the state of foreign opinion on the war and its causes. This opinion had been almost uniformly hostile to the action of England in forcing so unequal a combat with so over-matched an opponent. But, if it could be shown that the Boers had been arming for ten or a dozen years; that they had succeeded in placing double the number of men in the field which England had counted upon as likely to oppose her, and that their real aim and purpose were to contest with Great Britain the supremacy of rule in South Africa, England's action would not look so selfish or unfair, and a more modified view of her policy and motives might obtain. Not a word, therefore, was given to the public of the reliable information which was in possession of Lords Salisbury, Lansdowne, and Wolseley, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour, and of the less prominent members of the Ministry, about the actual Boer armaments and forces, and the date when President Kruger commenced to place the Republic in a state of defense. On the contrary, each of the Ministers responsible for the war declared, in so many words, that England was taken completely by surprise, and that the Boers had evidently begun their work of aggressive armament long before the time of the Jameson Raid.

Speaking in the House of Lords on the 30th of January, 1900, in reply to Lord Kimberley, the Prime Minister used these words :

"The noble earl says that we must have known about the artillery and munitions of war that the Republics were introducing. I ask, how on earth were we to know it ? I believe, as a matter of fact—though I do not give this as official—that the guns were generally introduced in boilers and locomotives, and the munitions of war were introduced in pianos. It was not our territory, we had no powers of search, we had no power of knowing what munitions of

war were sent in, and we certainly had no power of supervising their importation into the Republics."

This language and attitude were thoroughly in keeping with the whole policy of unscrupulous purpose and deception which brought on the war. It was a glaring suppression of the truth, as the following facts will show.

A few days after war began a document was found upon a British officer at Dundee which gave this whole English contention away, in all its suggestions and details. This document was in the form of a small book, and contained about 120 pages of matter. The front page reads as follows :

"Secret.

"This paper is transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for War for the personal information of..... while holding the appointment of..... and is to be considered secret.

"MILITARY NOTES

ON THE

DUTCH REPUBLICS OF SOUTH AFRICA,

COMPILED IN SECTION B. INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, WAR OFFICE.

REVISED JUNE, 1899."

The preface to the book reads :

"PREFACE.

"These notes have been carefully compiled from many sources, and are intended to supplement the following recent Intelligence Division publications :

"Reconnaissance Reports over the Vaal and Orange Rivers.

"Reconnaissance Reports on the Lines of Advance through the Orange Free State. Parts I., II., and III.

"Report on Natal Government Railways, and of the defense of them, etc., by Captain Gale, R.E.

"Report on the Communications in Natal, north of the latitude of Ladysmith.

"South African Republic: Road and Railway Reports.

"Swaziland. Precis of information on, 1898.

"Basutoland. Precis of information, revised to February, 1898.

"Notes on the Line of Communications, Cape Colony.

"J. C. ARDAGH, Major-General."

At page 15 we read :

"The actual number of rifles known to be now in possession of the Transvaal are as follows :

"RIFLES.

"Martini-Henry	34,000
Lee-Metford	2,850
Mauser	24,000
Guedes	2,000
Krag-Jorgensen	100
	62,950

"They have also acquired 2,000 Martini-Henry Carabines and 6,000 Webley Revolvers.

"The actual number of rifles in the Republic are more than double the number of burghers, but the surplus is intended to arm the disloyalists from Cape Colony and Natal."

On page 27 Lord Lansdowne settles the point about the date of the Boer armaments, and supplies a few items of other information of a startling kind, in addition :

"Of the enormous quantity of rifles now in possession of the South African Republic, only some 13,500 Martini-Henry rifles were in the country before the Jameson Raid. The whole of the remainder have been purchased since that date in England, France, Germany, and Belgium. This enormous stock of rifles would suffice to arm more than double the number of the whole forces of the Transvaal."

And on page 28, in the same connection, is found this supplementary and astounding bit of intelligence :

"From the record of shipments made in the United Kingdom it is known that the supply of ammunition in possession of the Republic is sufficient for a protracted campaign."

Here, then, we have the English War Office itself establishing the following facts against the public and political statements of the Jingo Ministers of the Government and the British press :

1. That the Boers had only a few thousand Martini-Henry rifles before the Jameson Raid.
2. That they had no Mauser rifles.
3. That the rifles subsequently purchased were bought in England as well as on the Continent, and
4. That it was from the United Kingdom that President Kruger

obtained "the supply of ammunition sufficient for a protracted campaign" !

The extent to which this policy of deliberate deception was carried by English statesmen will be more fully seen in further extracts from Lord Lansdowne's circular.

On pages 19 and 20 the following particulars are given :

"PERMANENT FORCES OF TRANSVAAL. CORPS OF STAATS ARTILLERY.

"In January, 1896, the strength of the Staats Artillery was 9 officers and 100 men, tho only 70 men were actually doing duty. Immediately after the Jameson Raid the corps was increased in strength to about 400, and in January last was stated by the Commandant-General to have an actual strength of 473 officers and men. This is exclusive of the reserve, which in the time of the Raid amounted only to 50 men, but may now be estimated at 200 or 300 at least.

"The men are all burghers of the State, altho among them individuals of foreign origin are to be found, and even some Englishmen.

"STAFF.

"The Staats Almanac for 1899 gives the following list of officers:
Lieutenant-Commandant Trichardt.
Major P. E. Erasmus.
1st Lieut. Adjutant Th. Kroon.
2nd Lieut. Adjt. W. Baaij.
Bandmaster 2nd Lieut. J. Maggs.
Quartermaster 2nd Lieut. E. B. E. Hoffman.

"ARTILLERY.

"Major J. F. Wolmarans.
Captain P. J. Van der Merwe.
1st Lieut. J. L. Pretorius.
Lieutenant M. J. de Jager.
" M. du Toit.
" F. Townsend.
" Oelofse."

We see it here explicitly declared, as known to the British Government, that the Transvaal Artillery was an active force of 70 men in January, 1896, with 9 officers and 100 men, nominally available ! What a proof this affords of "the great Dutch conspiracy" prior to the Jameson Raid !

Dealing with the Free State Artillery, the "Notes" on page 36 give the following facts :

"CHAPTER 4.

"MILITARY FORCES, ARMAMENTS, AND FORTS OF THE FREE STATE.

"In peace no head-quarter staff exists; on the outbreak of war a Commandant-General is elected by the District Commandants and Field Cornets, and receives his instructions from the President of the State. The District Commandants and Field Cornets have, however, the curious right during the campaign of discharging the Commandant-General, and reporting their reasons to the President, who, if he considers such reasons sufficient, will then appoint a day for the election of a successor. There is no 'war department' at Bloemfontein, as has been established during the last few years at Pretoria; but the Volksraad appoints annually a Committee of five or more of its members, who, in conjunction with the President, inquire into the state of war material (Law 29 of 1896).

"STAATS ARTILLERY.

"This corps is commanded by Major Albrecht, a German, and has two German officers. Its establishment comprises 114 of all ranks, and there is stated to be a reserve of 300 men. Of these 40 were mobilized by vote of the Raad, dated 23rd of June, 1899. The corps is recruited from the burgher class. Two non-commissioned officers have recently been instructed at Pretoria in field telegraphy.

"ARMAMENT.

"The following is a list of guns in charge of the Staats Artillery:
"3—3 p.r. M. L. Whitworths.
14—7.5 c.m. B. L. (Krupps), with eight ammunition wagons.
1—6 p.r. Whitworth.
1—3 c.m. Krupp.
1—3 p.r. Mountain Gun.
5—9 p.r. Armstrongs.
3—Rifle Maxims.
"By vote dated 23rd June, 1899, the Raad granted money for three Q.F. guns and three more Maxims. Funds were also voted for the purchase of improved field telegraphic equipment, 300 tents, provision wagons, and a large quantity of ammunition."

As showing the thoroughness of the information possessed by the English War Office of all the possible fighting forces of the Transvaal and Free State, I will quote the "Notes" on the Police Force of the South African Republic. These men (excepting the colored members), known in the war as "The Zarps," have fought with conspicuous bravery throughout the campaign, and the English officers who were sent to the Transvaal to obtain knowledge for

the War Office took note of this splendid body of burghers, as follows :

"TRANSVAAL POLICE FORCE.

"The total strength of this force on the 31st December, 1897, was 1,356, comprising 5 commandants, 14 lieutenants, 1 head-constable, 91 under officers, 448 mounted police, 636 white foot-police, and 164 native police. A further increase of 200 men for Johannesburg was sanctioned in May, 1899, and the men recruited. The mounted police are composed of much the same class as the Cape Mounted Police, but are not so efficient. The white foot-police are drilled as soldiers.

"The above does not include the Swaziland police, the strength of which is given in the Staats Almanac as 3 officers and 117 mounted police and 50 natives, but it is believed that the mounted police of Swaziland has since been increased to 400. The Swazi police are commanded by Lieut. C. Botha. This increase, however, is no increase in the total forces of the Republic, as it must be deducted from the burghers' strength."

We now come to the number of burghers who were available for the Boer armies. English Jingo papers have given various estimates of the forces which defeated Penn Symons, Yule, White, Buller, Warren, Methuen, and other British generals from the battle of Dundee to the surrender of Cronje. Some of these figures went as high as 100,000. Other, more modest, calculations put down the Boers in the field at from 50,000 to 70,000, not counting Colonial and foreign volunteers. The lowest English press calculation would not admit that these victories could have been gained over British troops with less than an army of 50,000 burghers for Botha, Cronje, De Wet, and De la Rey to draw upon for their commandoes.

Here are the figures which were in the possession of the English War Office in June, 1899 :

"Number of burghers liable to military service in the Transvaal : From 18 to 34 years of age, 15,696; from 34 to 50 years, 9,050; under 18 and above 50, 4,533. Grand total, 29,279."

At page 27 these figures are dealt with in the following observations :

"From the foregoing data it would appear that the total number of persons liable to military service in the Transvaal is as follows :

"Staats Artillery (including Reservists) . .	800
Police (including recent increase)	1,550
Burghers (exclusive of Staats Artillery Reservists)	28,979
"Grand total	31,329

"BURGHER FORCE, ORANGE FREE STATE.

"As in the case of the Transvaal, this force is the backbone of the military strength of the Free State, and is organized on similar tho not quite indentical lines.

"Every burgher is liable by law to military service between the ages of 16 and 60. The system of organization is territorial. Each ward elects its Field Cornet from amongst its own burghers, and each district its own Commandant.

"No figures as to the number of burghers liable to military service are published officially, but Von Lobell, in his annual reports on military changes, 1897, stated that the number was 20,000. As the Commandant of the Staats Artillery is a German, it is not improbable that Von Lobell derived his information from official sources. Moreover, this estimate agrees fairly well with the following calculation, based on actuarial formula, that the males between the ages of 16 and 60 are equivalent to 55 per cent. of the total male population."

The male population is then given, in tabulated form, for each district.

The circular proceeds :

"Taking all these matters into review, the following deductions may reasonably be made :

"Sick, caretakers of arms, etc., 10 per cent. of whole	2,930
Police duties	1,200
Johannesburg garrison (exclusive of artillery)	5,000
Pretoria (exclusive of artillery)	500
Force watching Rhodesia and holding in check natives in Zoutpansberg district	2,500
Force in Swaziland border	1,000
Force watching Mafeking	500
Force watching Fourteen Streams	100
"Total deduction from Transvaal forces	13,730

leaving an effective field force of, say, 16,000 burghers, including the Reservists of the Staats Artillery. The artillery portion of the force would comprise five field batteries, and possibly a smaller howitzer battery.

"Similarly, deductions must be made from the strength of the Free State :

"Sick, caretakers of farms, etc.	2,000
Force watching Basutoland	3,000
Force watching Kimberley	1,000
Garrison of Bloemfontein	500
"Total deduction from Free State forces	6,500

leaving a force to take the field from the Free State of about 13,500 burghers, with two batteries of field artillery.

"The grand total of the Dutch Republics' field force may be estimated, therefore, as follows :

"Transvaal	16,000
Free State	13,500
Disloyal Colonists	4,000
"Total	33,500

with seven batteries of field artillery, one howitzer battery, and 20 to 30 Maxim guns."

These estimates are too high in each particular. The deductions given in the number of available burghers of the Transvaal do not allow for backsliders, people in business, sons of widows exempt from service, men employed in mines by Government, clergymen, wealthy burghers who went away before war was declared, Government officials, railway servants, and a percentage of burghers holding pro-British sentiments who would not on that account be forced to go to the front.

On the other hand, the number of burghers allotted to the Johannesburg garrison would be 4,000 in excess of the needs of that post after war was commenced. The estimate was an error in exaggerating the number of Boers required to keep the Rand in order. The police of Johannesburg were quite equal to that duty.

The Free State had a percentage of Scotch and English burghers among its people. These men, except in a very few instances, did not join the Boer armies. They removed to Cape Colony before and after war was declared. Allowing for these desertions, and also for exemptions similar to those in the Transvaal, the available fighting force of the Free State would not reach beyond 10,000 men.

The "Disloyal Colonists" * who actually fought in the war numbered, according to one of their prominent organizers, not more than 3,500 men.

Taking these extra deductions from the War Office estimate, we find a net total of available fighting burghers for both Republics amounting to 27,500.

* The above estimate of Colonial "rebels" applies to the period of the war anterior to the resort by Lords Roberts and Kitchener to the farm-burning and other Weylerite methods of barbarous warfare. These brutalities are now (March, 1902) believed by many persons who have recently come from South Africa to have induced fully 10,000 more Cape Dutchmen to join the Boer commandoes during the last two years.

Account, however, must be taken of the Uitlanders of the Rand who volunteered to join the Transvaal army, and of the "foreign volunteers" who enlisted in the same service. Lord Lansdowne's "Notes" do not deal with these extraneous forces, as such auxiliaries were not anticipated or taken into account by the officers who collected facts and information for the British authorities.

The number of Uitlanders who joined the Boer commandoes would not exceed 3,000, while the "foreign volunteers"—that is, men who went expressly from Europe and America to help the Republics in the field—did not reach the number of 700. Accepting, however, these maximum estimates, they would add some 4,000 men to the burgher forces, making the grand total of the Federal armies reach the figure of 31,500.

This is nearly the same number which was obtained by the British War Office from its sources of information in the manner specified in the "Military Notes."

Lord Lansdowne's circular likewise quotes the text of the treaty of offensive and defensive alliance between the two Republics. It reads:

"Political Treaty concluded between the Orange Free State and the South African Republic, July, 1897:

"*Article I.* That there is to be everlasting peace between both States.

"*Article II.* That the two Republics shall mutually aid and help each other when the independence of either be threatened in any way, unless the State to give support should show and prove the injustice of such support.

"*Article III.* That the Governments of both States shall, as soon as possible, inform each other of such matters which may unfavorably affect the independence and peace of either of them.

. . . . . .

"*Article VII.* of the Military Convention agreed to in July, 1897, says: In a common war, one State may not conclude peace without the consent of the other."

It will be seen that this treaty, for the mutual protection of the Republics, was concluded in July, 1897, eighteen months after the Jameson Raid. Such a compact would have been one of the first acts of a conspiracy to overthrow British supremacy in South Africa. There is no record of any such plot in Lord Lansdowne's "Military Notes." On the contrary, it is shown how the treaty thus formed, like the arming of the two Republics, followed, and did not precede, the attempt on the part of Rhodes and Jameson to seize the Transvaal and its gold mines in 1896.

Chapter VI

BOER ARTILLERY AND COMMANDOES

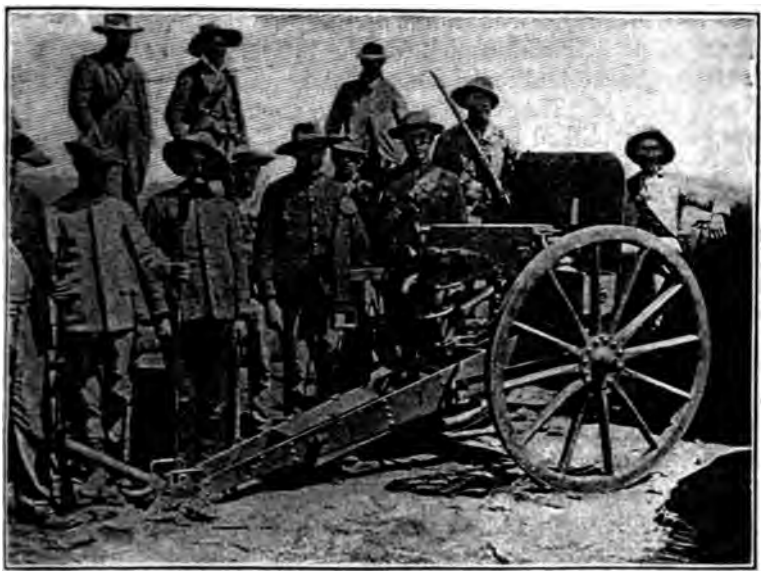
BOER GUNS—THE STAATS ARTILLERY—THE BOER COMMANDO SYSTEM OF MILITARY ORGANIZATION—BOER METHODS OF WARFARE.

THE information obtained by the British War Office as to the extent of the Boer preparations in arms and ammunition was approximately correct. The alleged methods of importation referred to by Lord Salisbury were, however, only employed in Jingo imagination. There was no disguise of any kind adopted in the purchase or conveyance of the armaments for the Republic. The Martini-Henry and Lee-Metford rifles were bought in England, and carried to Lourenzo Marquez in English ships—a means of transhipment which might well excuse the dull Portuguese customs' officials from suspecting hostile designs against England. Twelve million rounds of rifle ammunition were purchased in England, through Beckett and Co., of Pretoria, who were the Transvaal agents of Kynochs, of Birmingham. I failed to obtain while in Pretoria accurate information as to the amount of Mauser cartridges purchased in Europe, but it is safe to say that large quantities were obtained by both Republics from Belgium and Germany. There would be over 50,000,000 rounds of small-arm ammunition in possession of the Boers on the declaration of war. All the Webley revolvers referred to in Lord Lansdowne's "Military Notes" were "made in Birmingham" and purchased there for Boer service. Excepting the Mauser rifles and their ammunition, and the Creusot and Krupp guns, the weapons and bullets with which the burghers have fought their English foes were supplied by English manufacturers and forwarded by means of English vessels to the seaport nearest to Pretoria.

The facts as to the character of the Boer artillery were not so well known to the British War Office, with the exception of those relating to the twenty-two automatic guns. These Maxim-Nordenfelts and Vickers-Maxims were bought in London. On one of them I found the following inscription:

"Maxim-Nordenfelt C. and A. Co., Ltd.,
No. 2124,
37 m|m Aut. Gun. Mark II.
Maxim-Nordenfelt, London."

These were the "pom-poms" which did almost as much to demoralize the British armies in the larger engagements of the war as the deadly shooting qualities of the Mauser rifle. English Government officials knew of these purchases, as they did of the ammunition and other armaments specified in Lord Lansdowne's



A MAXIM-NORDENFELT AND ITS SERVICE

"Notes," and it was equally known to them that they were forwarded direct from London to Lourenzo Marquez.

In addition to these four small batteries of automatic guns, the Boer Government had purchased four 15 c.m. Creusots ("Long Toms"), six 7.5 c.m. quick-firing Creusot field guns, four Krupp howitzers, and eight Krupp field guns, of the same caliber as the 7.5 c.m. Creusot quick-firing fifteen-pounder—in all, forty-four guns. The Orange Free State had only time to acquire six Krupps of the same class and caliber, but of an older pattern, and two Maxim-Nordenfelts, before war began. The two Republics had fifty-two guns, all told, of the classes described, which, with half a dozen more of Maxims and Krupps taken from Jameson in 1896,

comprised the entire artillery equipment of the Federal forces. The old Armstrongs and Whitworths referred to in the secret English circular as being part of the Free State artillery, were not used throughout the war. Adding these, however, to the list with which I was supplied by officials of the Boer Government, it will be seen that the number, tho not the character, of the Federal artillery corresponds almost exactly with the details in the possession of the British War Office.

There was no secrecy of any kind employed in the purchase of the Creusot guns. They were openly bought of the famous French firm, and their range, capacity, and simplicity of breech mechanism had been described long before the war in the Paris "Echo des Mines et de la Metallurgie" for the information of any British military attaché in France who could have spared sufficient time from a study of "L'Affaire Dreyfus" to acquaint himself with what was being published concerning the French guns destined for the South African Republic. These guns have made their mark in the war as probably the most effective in range and velocity ever produced. The fifteen-pounder Creusot far outclassed the vaunted British field gun of the same caliber, having 2,000 yards of a longer range, along with other corresponding advantages over its English rival.

A dozen batteries of these splendid guns were in order when hostilities began, despite General Joubert's protests against any more guns being bought. "What can I do with more guns?" the old man was in the habit of exclaiming, when the certainty of war was seen by other members of the Executive Council as Joubert could not, or would not, recognize. "Have we not more of them already than we can use?" This short-sighted view was largely responsible for the fatal delay in placing an order which, had it only been carried out in time, might have changed the whole fortunes of the war. Joubert's blind faith in the peace-compelling power of the English Liberal Party, and his belief in a possible conversion of Queen Victoria to the views set forth in his letter of June, 1899, were responsible for even more deplorable errors than this in the initial stages of the great struggle. He failed to see that neither the monarch nor the Opposition had the power or the will to oppose Mr. Chamberlain's policy when the combined national and commercial and religious conscience of Great Britain was in "righteous conflict" with the Boer rulers of the world's richest gold reefs—over a two years' dispute as to the franchise. Other patriots have died with warnings born of bitter disillusionment not to put faith in princes. The old hero of the Boer War of Freedom could justly say to his country when his

passing came in Pretoria, "Put not your trust in English queens or politicians."

The Transvaal Staats Artillery numbered 1,000 trained burghers, mostly young men, in 1899. The officers' names are correctly given in the "Military Notes." In 1896 the same force consisted of one hundred men and nine officers, on active duty. The corps was first founded in 1890. Majors Wolmarans and Erasmus were

Photo by Mr. Davitt

COMMANDANT TRICHARDT, HEAD OF THE TRANSVAAL ARTILLERY

sent to Europe by General Joubert to study the artillery systems of the Continent. They remained away, chiefly in Holland and Germany, for four years, and began to organize the Republic's tiny artillery force on their return. The encounter with the Jameson Raiders at Doornkop in January, 1896, was their first experience of actual combat, and the surrender of the troopers before a Boer gun was fired left them with bloodless laurels on an unfought field. The Raid, however, awoke the Executive to the necessity for a larger force, and the year 1897 saw the commencement of the effective training and increase of that body which enabled the

Republic in its hour of need to have the service of the most successful artillerists who have ever handled guns on a battle-field.

These men were not trained, as the English press alleged, by German, French, or Russian officers. Erasmus and Wolmarans did the necessary training; no foreigners being required for the purpose. Two German lieutenants were in charge of the Johannesburg Fort when war began, and three Dutch officers and one private were numbered in the force. Outside of these six or seven Europeans, the whole Transvaal Artillery was composed of Africander Boers.

In the Orange Free State an ex-German officer, Major Albrecht, had command of that Republic's artillery, which numbered 300 men. A few of these were Europeans, some more were Dutch from Cape Colony, but over ninety per cent. of the corps were Free Staters.

A few words explanatory of the military organization of the Boers will not be out of place ere we come to see the little Republics locked in deadly combat with their gigantic antagonist. The basis of the system is thus laid down and described in the Transvaal Constitution:

"The military power shall comprise all the able-bodied men in this Republic, and, if necessary, all such natives within the country whose chiefs are subordinate to the Republic.

"By able-bodied white men shall be understood, all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty years of age.

"For the purpose of classifying the field forces according to locality, the territory of the Republic shall be divided into Field-Cornetcies and Districts. The boundaries of these Field-Cornetcies and Districts shall be fixed jointly by the President of the Executive Council, the Commandant-General, and the Commandants and Field Cornets in the adjoining Divisions.

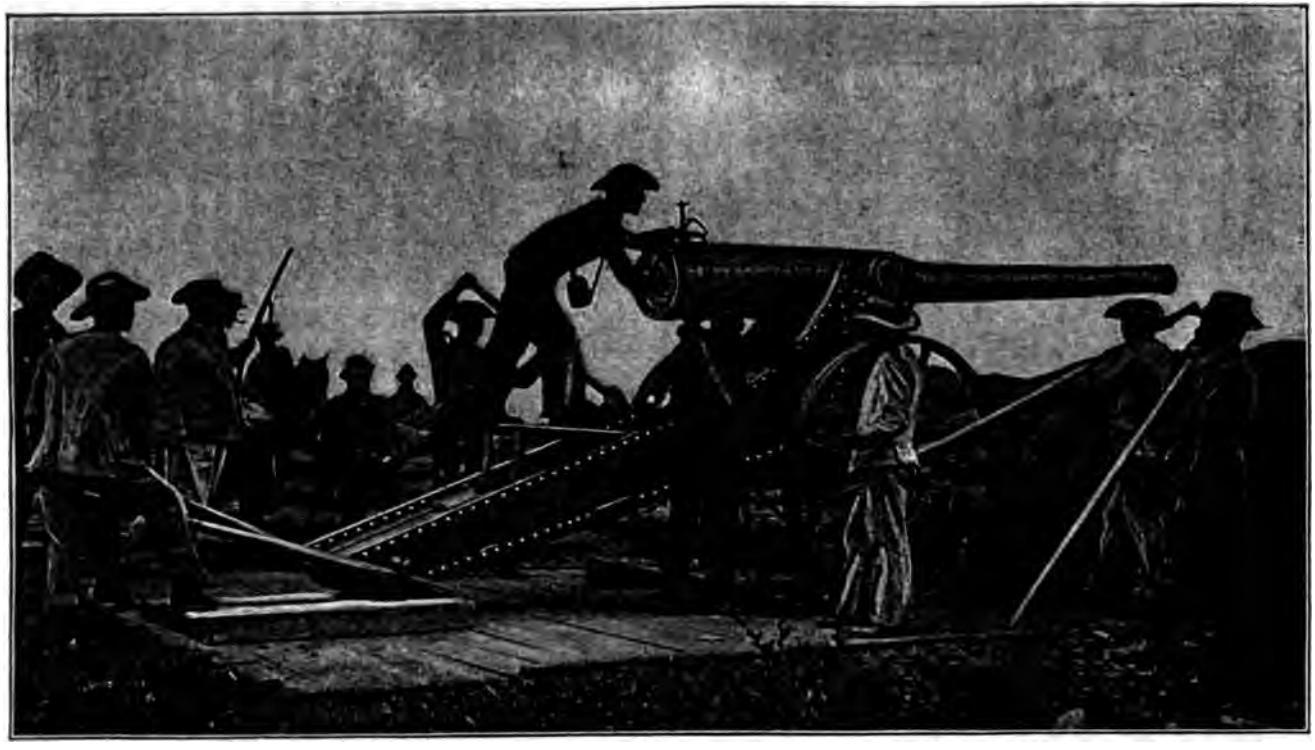
"The troops shall be under the command of officers, ranking upwards as follows: Assistant Field Cornets, Field Cornets, Commandants, and Commandant-General.

"The officers shall be elected by a majority of votes, namely: the subordinate officers by the enfranchised burghers of the different wards, the Commandants by the burghers in the Districts, and the Commandant-General by the burghers of the Republic.

"The voting tickets for the election of these officers shall be handed to the respective Landrosts (Magistrates), who shall send the same to the Executive Council.

"Not more than two Commandants shall be elected by any District.

"The field forces, with the exception of the colored mercenaries, shall be called out to maintain order; to go on commando (to take



A "LONG TOM" AND ITS SERVICE

the field) in the event of internal risings; and, without any exception, to defend the country and to wage war upon foreign foes."

It may be observed here that, despite the power given in the Grondwet to utilize native subject races in defense of the country, in no instance did the Boers avail themselves of the service of such allies in this war until the British had extensively employed armed Kaffirs in the field. It is absolutely false to assert they did so in the earlier stages of the conflict, while, on the other hand, it will be proved further on in this narrative, by undeniable facts and photographs, that savages were employed against the Transvaal and Free State forces in the defense of Mafeking and Kimberley, at Deredepoort, and throughout the whole campaign.

Other Grondwet provisions specify the class of men who are to be exempt from military service; they include members of the Volksraad, State officials, Ministers of the Church, duly appointed school teachers, dealers, only sons of widows, "and all who can adduce such lawful and well-founded reasons as shall excuse them."

All burghers capable of bearing arms are, however, compelled to go on commando whenever martial law is proclaimed.

The merits on one side, and the weakness and deficiencies on the other, of this military system will be pointed out when we come shortly to deal with operations in the field.

The declaration of war gave to the military critics topics of absorbing interest for discussion. The British army, drilled and equipped on the general European disciplined system, was to meet an opponent untrained in military tactics, but formidable on account of his mobility, skill in marksmanship, and the unknown quantity of his unit initiative and formation on a field of large operations. Apart from comparative numbers and equipment, the Boers would possess many obvious advantages which, tho they could not, humanly speaking, be expected to enable the Transvaal and Free State forces to prevail against the strength and resources of the British Empire, would give to their resistance a more determined and prolonged character than the mass of English opinion flattered itself in believing. These probable advantages caused the saner British critics some anxiety in their forecasts of the conflict into which Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy and the Uitlander knavery of Johannesburg had plunged Great Britain.

The coming fight would be on a field seven thousand miles distant. The country in which operations would have to be carried on would offer many difficulties in transport and in concentration. Climatic conditions would tell against the health of the English soldier, and, especially, against the horses which would be indis-

pensable to that branch of the British forces on which most reliance would have to be placed for turning movements, rapidity of action, and for dealing the final blow where their adversaries should meet with a reverse. Conversely, the Boer would know every inch of the ground. His horse, like himself, would have kinship with the veldt. He could be counted upon for swiftness of movement and for great mobility of forces. There would be little or no trouble with a cumbersome commissariat, or with unwieldy heavy guns. His unit formation would offer a minimum target for the weapons which the British would rely most upon for their demoralizing and striking power—the artillery; while this disadvantage for the enemy would be greatly increased in the fact that the English battalion formation would give the Boers the maximum of aiming opportunity in big human targets for their noted powers of straight shooting.

Then, there was the well-known natural strategy of the Boer to utilize cover. This, with his unequaled mobility, was virtually his only idea of military tactics; but in countries like Natal, the Free State, and the Transvaal it was an idea which, like the single plan of the cat in the fable of pussy and the fox, would probably turn out more effective in its application than all the Salisbury Plain maneuvers that would be employed on the other side. The task of crushing such an opponent, numerically weak tho he might be, was considered by competent military critics not likely to be settled in an imposing military promenade from Cape Town to Pretoria, such as the English Jingo papers bragged exultingly it would be. Britain's military prestige was destined to bear a startling testimony to the correctness of the critics' view before the Boer forces should be beaten into a final submission to overwhelming numbers.

Chapter VII

BRITISH AND BOER PATRIOTISM

THE RAND AND THE WAR—UITLANDERS FOR THE BOERS—AN ENGLISH APPRECIATION OF THE EX-RAND "REFORMERS"—VOLUNTEERING IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR THE CONFLICT—TRANSVAAL VOLUNTEERS FOR THE REPUBLIC—PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMBAT.

WHILE the burghers of the Rand, with large numbers of non-British Uitlanders, were mustering for the front in the early days of October, the trains for Natal and Delagoa Bay were being crowded every day with refugees of the "Reforming" camp, mainly British and Colonial. They rushed off in a needless panic weeks before war broke out. They were neither threatened nor molested by the police or officials of Johannesburg. No immediate risk menaced their persons or liberties, yet so eager were these very men who were declared to have invited Jameson in 1895 to come to lead them to an attack on the Republic to get away from the impending fight, that they rushed into cattle trucks in their hurry to be off; fought for places in every kind of conveyance —some of them, in their mad desire to escape, actually pulling British women out of the carriages in order to obtain their places.

It was a significant fact, eloquent in its testimony to the dishonesty of the movement against the Transvaal, that very few of the population of the Rand, outside of British nationality, volunteered to fight on the English side. Indeed, comparatively few even of the British element on the gold fields showed any desire to take up arms in a war which was to hand over the laws as well as the mining industry of the Transvaal to Mr. Cecil Rhodes and Co.

On the other hand, Hollanders, Germans, Frenchmen, Irishmen, Italians, Scandinavians, Americans, Russians, and Swiss joined the Boers—miners who must have suffered equally with the British Uitlanders if the grievances put forward on their behalf by England, as a pretext for the war, had had any real existence. It is not in human nature to volunteer to assist in saving a Government which does you a wrong. Coerced to do so some men may be. Others may sell their services to such a Power. But, in the case of the miners of the Rand who joined the Boers, there was neither

JOHANNESBURG UITLANDERS, FLEEING FROM THE EXPECTED WAR, FIGHTING FOR SEATS IN OPEN TRUCKS

coercion nor pay employed to enlist their help. They were free to leave the country, like the British miners, or to remain; secure in the neutrality of Continental Powers against being forced to fight against their will. A large number voluntarily selected to remain, and to risk their lives in defending the South African Republic.

Commenting upon the rush of the British Uitlanders out of the reach of danger on the eve of the war, the military correspondent of the "Newcastle Chronicle," in his impressions of Maritzburg, in a letter which appeared on the 5th of December, gave the following pen picture of the precious refugees whom he had seen:

"It must be a great relief to the military commander in Natal to know that the 30,000 or 40,000 Uitlanders of Johannesburg had left that city before the outbreak of hostilities. Otherwise we should have had Cornishmen and Jew boys from 'the golden city' whining and imploring our generals to come and save them. Nothing can exceed the contempt of the real Englishman for this veritable scum of the earth. It makes our blood boil to think that the pick of the British army is engaged in mortal combat to make things easy for the sharpers and swindlers who fatten on the illicit profits of the gold industry. On the other hand, one cannot help respecting the Boers, who are fighting for their hearths and homes. It will be one of General Buller's chief difficulties, when the troops near Pretoria and Johannesburg, to know how to deal with the armed rabble who will crowd round him ready to offer advice and to seize on all lands and property within reach. Verily the lust for gold brings out the worst passions in the human race!"

Scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed as each train for Natal left Johannesburg with its passenger load of burghers. Women and girls accompanied the commandoes on their march to the Bramfontein railway station; many of the fair sex insisting on carrying the Mausers of their brothers or sweethearts on the way. The most popular body leaving Johannesburg was the Police Corps. Finer specimens of combatants could not be seen anywhere. Their mounts were of the best, while the trained bearing, the soldierly appearance of the men, who had kept down the rowdy elements of the gold-reefed city, and had preserved its peace as the law and order of no other great mining center had ever been upheld, evoked general praise. They were cheered again and again by the populace as they neared the train which was to take them to meet the enemy. "We have warrants to arrest General Sir Redvers Buller," cried the "Zarps," while the Boer girls shouted back, "Don't return without Rhodes, Jameson, and Milner," indicating the feeling which was uppermost in the minds of the women towards the

men whom they believed to be most responsible for the war which was to desolate many a burgher home.

Outside the Johannesburg district the mustering of the burgher forces was more quietly, but not less ardently or loyally, carried out. A wave of the strongest patriotic feeling swept through the tiny State at the thought of the wrong on which England had resolved, at the instigation of the meanest and most contemptible men and motives that ever robbed the names of war and civilized government of every shred of honorable meaning. The women were everywhere the most earnest and strenuous in the spirit of resistance to British aggression. They took pride in boasting of

THE JOHANNESBURG POLICE LEAVING FOR THE FRONT, OCTOBER 26, 1899

This company has distinguished itself for bravery in many engagements

husbands and sons having gone to the front when the danger signal of English troops on the Natal border called the burghers to arms. "I have my husband and three sons in commando," proudly exclaimed a Boer matron in conversation with me at Middelburg, "and another who is only fourteen is guarding the bridge. I wish I had twenty more to fight against our enemy." It was this deep, all-pervading love of liberty and country, and hatred of the oppression and perfidy associated in the Boer mind with the name of England, which has made the war the most memorable ever fought for nationality and freedom.

English politicians and papers have boasted loudly of the patriotism of their people because 140,000 men out of a total (British) population of, say, 35,000,000 volunteered to join the regular Imperial forces when war was declared. The boast was a justifiable

one, to the extent of the facts and figures on which it rested. The volunteering in Great Britain proved the war to be popular with the masses. The known numerical weakness of the Boers, and the too sanguine predictions of the Jingo newspaper prophets as to the probable short duration of the conflict, had, possibly, some little human influence upon the action of some of those who responded to the appeal of their Government. Still, the youth of England rallied in loyal enthusiasm to the British flag in the combat with the Republics. The volunteering was a prompt and patriotic response to a sense of national duty, and Englishmen are justified in extolling the citizen virtue which was thus displayed.

But what of the Boers in the corresponding connection? More than seventy-five per cent. of the (Dutch) manhood of the Transvaal and Orange Free State capable of bearing arms volunteered to face and fight "the greatest Empire the world has ever seen," as we hear it described daily. There were no recruiting sergeants employed; no pay was offered or expected; there was virtually no press to excite youthful military ardor in impassioned appeals to stand for the flag; no great demonstrations organized to evoke popular enthusiasm; no Boer Kipling; no illustrated papers; and no military bands to awaken soldierly desires in the breasts of the young. Yet not in a single historic instance of civilized warfare, has there ever been so prompt and so great a muster of men, in proportion to population, to fight what all the world deemed a hopeless contest, as readily responded at the call of the Kruger Government. Fully one-ninth of the whole people made this magnificent and unique answer to the invaders of their country and freedom; a number which, if based upon the Transvaal Boer population of 150,000 souls, would be equivalent to a volunteer British muster, on the same scale, of nearly 4,000,000 men! And the Government which was thus sustained in its hour of peril has been described in England as having been unpopular with its own people, while these same people, after this unparalleled exhibition of devotion to country, principle, and liberty, have been persistently and malignantly reviled by the baser kind of English critic, and never even justly judged by their less hostile British foes.

Nor did the two Raads lack any of the patriotic spirit so splendidly shown by their constituents. Four out of the six members of the Executive Council—the Transvaal Cabinet—went to the front, as did the Chairman of the First Volksraad, with no less than two-thirds of the members of both Chambers. In fact, every successful Boer general will be found to have been either a member or an official of the Raads of the two Republics on the day of the declaration of war.

Boer "incapacity" in every department of civil government has been the constant theme of Jingo accusation. It has been harped upon until the violence of reiteration has tended to defeat the purpose of the calumniators. In nothing has this blind, unreasoning antipathy been more conspicuous than in the uniform silence of the Cape and English press on every incident or act which has

THREE GENERATIONS OF FIGHTING BOERS

conspicuously belied the unjust estimate of the Boer by his implacable enemy. The admirable way in which order was maintained on the Rand by these farmer-administrators of government when the mines were shut down, and upwards of one hundred thousand Kaffirs were to be dealt with as discharged employees, never won a single word of appreciation from a British journal. Here was a task which might well tax the power, patience, and civic abilities of the oldest and strongest Government in Europe. Yet it was

carried through by Kruger's officials without any resort to violence, and with very little public disorder; with less popular disturbance, in fact, than a strike of a thousand British working men in London or Glasgow would occasion. The sound common sense and tact of the civic and military officials of the little Republic accomplished this difficult work, and the Boers made no boast about its performance.

Consider the situation after Mr. Conyngham Greene's visit to the Executive on the memorable 11th of October. A hostile army was advancing through Natal towards the Transvaal border; resisting forces were to be prepared and handled; defenses to be seen to in the East and West, as in the South; relief to be organized; ammunition and stores to be distributed; plans of operations to be considered; new laws to be framed; proclamations to be issued; law and order looked after and upheld where sixty or seventy thousand British subjects became so many semi-hostile, clamoring refugees, demanding safe conduct from the Rand and from the other centers of the Republic. There was, in addition, the enormous number of natives already referred to, whose savage nature and dispositions called for special vigilance after they had learned that they were to be expelled on the shutting down of the mines. These and a hundred and one other exacting responsibilities confronted the rustic statesmen of the Republic, and were faced and overcome quietly, systematically, completely. There was no breakdown in the civil or military machinery, no panic, no disorder. A dozen of these despised "farmer administrators," the Jouberts, Kocks, Reitzes, Wolmaranses, Smutses, Groblers, Van der Merwes, Van Dams, Krauses, and Municks, with the aid of a few more minor officials in Pretoria and in Johannesburg, possessing rare intelligence and a splendid loyalty to the little State, got through this huge multiform task in a manner that could not be surpassed, if indeed it could even be equaled, by any European State Administration. Men not endowed by nature or acquirement with real governing capacity could never have accomplished this work in this way. There would have been woful breakdowns in every department, blunders in dealing with trying difficulties, and a collapse of all respect for law and order, had President Kruger and his Executive been the incapables their English traducers declared them to be in all the higher responsibilities of government.

Two significant proclamations were issued by the Executive as a part of the policy forced upon the Government by the war, which were probably unique in the history of civilized States. One ordered an immediate reduction of all official salaries, averaging fifty per cent. above a certain figure, and the other suspended the

payment of rent for houses occupied by the families of fighting burghers, and of farms similarly circumstanced. Action of this kind in the interest of the industrial democracy would scarcely be tolerated in a capitalist-ridden State. The British Ministry did not solicit Parliament to frame such a self-denying law. Nor did the wealthy conspirators of Park Lane or other Chartered Company promoters of the war make any offer to lessen for the British taxpayer the cost of the conflict which the Rand millionaires and their accomplices had successfully engineered. The maligned Boer was in every sense and on every occasion the patriotic and self-denying contrast to his sordid English foe.

Chapter VIII

DISPOSITION OF BRITISH AND FEDERAL FORCES

BRITISH AND FEDERAL FORCES IN THE FIELD ON THE DECLARATION OF WAR—THEIR RELATIVE STRENGTH AND DISPOSITION—CHARACTER SKETCH OF COMMANDANT-GENERAL JOUBERT.

BEFORE the actual commencement of hostilities the disposition of troops on both sides indicated a mutual belief that fighting would begin, as in the war of 1880, at or near Laing's Nek. Ladysmith was, therefore, made the chief, and Dundee the secondary, base of probable British operations in North Natal, while Newcastle and Charlestown, nearer the Boer border, were held as points of observation with small bodies of cavalry who were under instruction to fall back on the Glencoe-Dundee camp before any large force of advancing Boers. The railway from Maritzburg to Charlestown, running through Natal, enabled reenforcements to be sent to any point threatened with attack.

The number of British troops in Natal on the date of the delivery of the British Note was estimated by the Boer authorities to be from 15,000 to 20,000. They were distributed as follows:

Forces of observation and patrol north of Glencoe, about 1,000; at Glencoe Junction and Dundee, about 5,000, comprising Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1st Leicestershires, 18th Hussars, King's Royal Rifles, several companies of mounted infantry, four batteries of Royal Field Artillery, and various Natal Volunteer levies.

At Ladysmith about 6,000 Imperial troops were massed, including King's Royal Rifles, the Devons, Manchesters, Gloucesters, and the Liverpool Regiment, together with cavalry, embracing Lancers, Hussars, and mounted infantry, six batteries of Field Artillery, and numerous Natal, Cape, and other Volunteers.

At Colenso, Estcourt, Maritzburg, and Durban further forces were stationed, but in smaller details.

South of the Orange River a body of 700 or 800 troops held the Stormberg Junction, the center of a pro-Boer locality, in the north of Cape Colony. Other detachments were posted at various points along the railway from Molteno to East London,

as a menace to possible active sympathizers among the Dutch Colonists with their kindred across the Orange and Vaal Rivers. There was also a small garrison at De Aar in charge of immense military stores.

Measures for the protection of Kimberley and Mafeking and of the Western border had also been taken, and an abundance of ammunition had been forwarded to these points from Cape Town before any interruption of railway communication had occurred.

MILITARY ATTACHÉS OF THE BOER ARMY

These dispositions of the enemy's troops necessarily influenced the distribution of the opposing Federal forces. The Transvaal frontier, north and east of Natal, and the Western boundary, from Fourteen Streams to the most northern point where an advance from Rhodesia by Chartered Company troops (Kaffir or British) might be expected, had to be guarded by Transvaalers. At Fourteen Streams the Transvaal and Orange Free State joined the British territory of Griqualand West, and the frontier from thence south to the Orange River, east to Basutoland, and north to Botha's Pass, near Laing's Nek, had to be watched by the Free State burghers. This combined frontier line would be over a

thousand miles in extent, and demanded large drafts upon the Federal commandoes for defensive and patrolling purposes.

The Free State had the most vulnerable border-line to guard, with the lesser forces of the allied Republics at its disposal. Two lines of railway, from British seaports, one from Port Elizabeth, and another from East London, entered its territory in the Bethulie district, while the main line from Cape Town to Kimberley, Mafeking, and Rhodesia also skirted its western frontier the whole length of Griqualand West. The enemy's chief force was to advance by these lines on Bloemfontein and Pretoria, according to the forecasts of all the military critics, and it was therefore decided to compel him, if possible, to fight his first battles on the territory of the first Boer Republic which he had grabbed from its founders. Natal was also the nearest British colony to the strongest and best-equipped of the allied States. She had clamored for war through her Jingo Governor in July, and it was thought proper, on political as on strategical grounds, to anticipate the British invasion of the Free State by a Boer advance into Natal.

The Federals began to mobilize their small armies in September, when it became evident, from the war cries of the English press, the hurried embarkations of troops, and the menacing language of Mr. Chamberlain's replies to Mr. Kruger's concessions, that the British Government meant war and annexation, while pretending to seek only a redress of Uitlander grievances. The Colonial Secretary's final despatch on the 22nd of September was England's ultimatum, and no time was lost by the Boer Governments after that date in preparing their resisting forces. Mr. Kruger was in favor of launching his reply of the 9th of October, the day after the receipt of Mr. Chamberlain's message breaking off the negotiations, but both General Joubert and President Steyn strongly urged a further delay in the hope and belief that Great Britain would not proceed to extremities. The calling out of the British Reserves and the decision of the Cabinet to send 50,000 more troops to Cape Colony and Natal after Mr. Chamberlain's ultimatum had been despatched, left no further doubt upon any mind in South Africa as to the certainty of war. A fortnight had thus been lost by the Federals, and gained by their enemy, in the work of massing men near the threatened scenes of first encounter.

On the 11th of October, when the word "War" was flashed over the wires from Pretoria, the combined Boer forces near the British borders of the two Republics numbered 26,000 men. They were distributed as follows: On the Natal border, chiefly at Sandspruit, Volksrust, and near the Buffalo River, 8,000, under the supreme command of General Joubert; in the west, watching the Bechuana-

land border and Mafeking, 5,000, under General Cronje; while at or near Deredepoort, on the borders of Rhodesia; in the Zoutpansberg district in the north; at Komatipoort, in the east (the Portuguese border), and near the Swaziland border, there were commandoes averaging 300 men each. Bridges and culverts had also to be guarded over the whole extent of the railways in the Transvaal against possible injury by English partisans within the Republic. These various points, with small emergency garrisons in Johannesburg and Pretoria, would absorb a total of some 2,000 more men.

The Free State commandoes were scattered over an area very little less extended. There were 3,000 men under Martinus Prinsloo at Harrismith and along the Drakensberg, watching Van Reenan's Pass and the railway from Ladysmith which entered the Free State through that alpine gap in the mountains. Grobler and Ollivier had a combined commando of Free Staters, Transvaalers, and Cape Colony Africanders of 3,500 men in the southern district, guarding the dangerous border where the two lines from the Cape Colony crossed the Orange River and formed a junction at Springfontein. Further west, near Belmont, a force of 1,500, under Jacob (Koos) Prinsloo, watched the railway from De Aar, while some 2,000 more under Wessels and Ferreira were in observation upon the British garrison at Kimberley. An additional 1,000 men were employed in guarding the Basuto borderland and the bridges and culverts along the whole railway line through the Free State from Bethulie to Vereeniging.

Each of the large commandoes had a share of the combined artillery, in proportion to the number of their men, or in respect of the extent of the enemy's force which the positions occupied might demand.*

The total burgher force in the field on the day war was declared was inadequate to the carrying out of any strong forward movement. Great distances separated the scattered commandoes, and the railways were not sufficiently extended in either Republic for purposes of rapid concentration. It thus happened that, beyond the general idea of defending the territory of the allied States against invasion from the south and west (which was the only military plan of the two Republics, and the most urgent purpose in every Boer mind), no prearranged scheme of operations had been decided upon excepting that of an immediate advance on Natal.

Laing's Nek was the object of keenest military attention on both sides, and the spot where a collision between the opposing armies

* These forces were augmented by 7,000 or 8,000 more men, burghers and volunteers, by Christmas, 1899; thus raising the combined Federal armies to a total strength of 33,000, the highest number placed by the Republics in the field during any single stage of the war.

THE BOER COMMANDO QUARDING VAN REENAN'S PASS

was first expected. Volksrust is the railway station on the Transvaal side of the tunnel which pierces the Nek, and Charlestown the station on the Natal side of the line connecting the British and Boer territories. It was round this locality, too, that historic memories gathered most in the minds of the men who were awaiting with mutual impatience the unloosening of war passions. Majuba Hill was visible to some of both forces in its towering height of mountain majesty, recalling the victory of Joubert to the burghers whom he again commanded, and conjuring up in British thoughts the fate of Colley and of his defeated forces. To repeat Majuba was the vow and determination on one side; to avenge and reverse Majuba the grim resolve on the other. Ingogo and Laing's Nek were likewise inspiring memories in the one camp, and of humiliating reverses in that of the enemy, as both awaited the signal which might witness repetitions of these conflicts on the very ground fought upon in 1881.

An early indication of the resourcefulness of the burghers in handling heavy artillery was seen in the dragging of a large Creusot gun up the steep side of Boskop Hill, on the border near Volksrust, the day the last Boer message was handed to Great Britain's representative. The placing of this piece upon the mountain was deemed to be impossible by the Creusot engineer, M. Leon, who was present. The hill was considered too precipitous and rugged. This, however, was not the view of the Boers. Three hundred volunteers were called for by Colonel Trichardt, ropes and chains were requisitioned, and in a few hours' time the muzzle of the formidable gun, subsequently known as "Long Tom," was pointing from the towering elevation towards the enemy's position across the border.

Before orders were received from Pretoria for a forward movement, General Joubert had issued instructions to all the men and officers, both as to the discipline and conduct of burghers when in occupation of any portion of the enemy's country. In reference to their attitude towards food and property when in British territory he spoke in strong terms, and his words of warning were in keeping with his whole career and character. He said:

"When we are unwillingly compelled to cross the border-line of our country, let it not be thought or said that we are a band of robbers; and with that view let us remain as far as possible away from any private dwellings or places, where no enemy is stationed, and not allow each one to help himself.

"When food, forage, or cattle are needed, let one or two persons be appointed in each division, and let them be assisted by as many men, and, if necessary, officers, as may be required to acquire

such goods from the owner or caretaker, enter them upon a proper list, and, if desired, let a receipt be given for the same, with a promise of recompense by the Government of the S. A. R.

"I will not allow robbery or plunder, and forbid any personal injury to be done to any private individual.—P. J. JOUBERT, Commandant-General."

Commandant-General Joubert was in his 68th year when he found himself once again in the field against the implacable enemy

DETACHMENT OF BOERS GUARDING A PASS

of Boer nationhood. He was born on the 21st of January, 1831, in the district of Graaff-Reinet, Cape Colony. His Breton ancestors arrived in the country in 1688; one Pierre Joubert and his young wife, Isabeau Richard, having formed part of the Huguenot contingent of emigrants sent out by the Netherlands Company twenty years after Jan Van Riebeck's original consignment of settlers had arrived at the Cape. The Jouberts joined in the first Boer trek rather than live as British subjects, and followed Pretorius, Uys, Potgieter, and others into Natal to found a State of their own. The English pursued them, grabbed the country, and the Jouberts, with others of their race, crossed into the Transvaal. Joshua Fran-

çois, the father of the future general, died shortly after the selection of the new home and country, and the son, with other children, was left to the care of a widowed mother. He grew into manhood a strong, clear-headed youth, with a more than average Boer education; his family being well known for its accomplishments, and his own acquirements being supplemented in the tuition of an English teacher, a Mr. Stead, of Pretoria.

In 1852 he took part in the campaign against the Chief Sechele, the Kaffir protégé of the famous Dr. Livingston. In this he had for a companion-in-arms his future friend, Paul Kruger. He married a Miss Botha, and settled at Wakkerstroom, where his ability in matters of business and general capacity won him the esteem and confidence of his fellow-burghers. He was elected to the Volksraad in 1863, and remained the representative of his district until he was elected to the Chairmanship of the Assembly in 1875. His part in the opposition to the Shepstone-Frere Scheme of Annexation, and in the War of Freedom which followed has been briefly touched upon in his letter to Queen Victoria.

His command of the small forces of the Transvaal in the contests with the unfortunate General Colley showed him to be an able officer, with all the magnetic qualities of a soldier who can inspire great confidence in his subordinates. By a series of rapid but well-calculated movements he smashed the blundering Englishman in every encounter, and finally overwhelmed him in the brilliant attack which on the summit of Majuba ended both the career of Colley and the usurpation of the English.

The triumphs of the War of Freedom gave Joubert unbounded prestige with the Boer people, and his subsequent visits to England and the United States enabled him to taste some of the pleasurable recognition of a widespread fame. He subsequently contested the Presidency of the Republic twice with Mr. Kruger, and was beaten by only 700 votes in the first election. In Transvaal politics he was what might be called progressive, in opposition to Mr. Kruger's more conservative principles and views. He was the first debater in the Volksraad, and a gifted after-dinner speaker. His popularity in the Republic was probably greater than that of the President, and his position as Commandant-General was as secure in the confidence of the people as was that of the Presidency for his friend and rival. He was less opposed to the English, in a racial sense, than other Boer leaders, and up to the receipt of Mr. Chamberlain's ultimatum on the 22nd of September, 1899, reposed a greatly misguided confidence in the Liberalism of England and of the once Gladstonian Party.

The veteran of many small campaigns, the capable organizer

FREE STATE COMMANDANTS

of a few thousand burghers when his French and Dutch blood coursed more swiftly through his veins, was called upon when nearing his seventieth year to fight the greatest army England had ever placed in the field. The task was too big for the conqueror of Colley, and he crossed the Natal frontier on the 12th of October with none of the enthusiasm and little of the confidence with which he carried the Vierkleur to victory on this same ground twenty golden years before.

Chapter IX

KRAAIPAN

SOME BOER INITIAL MISTAKES—FIRST BLOOD FOR THE FEDERALS—KRAAIPAN—BOER AND BRITISH REPORTS COMPARED—SKETCH OF GENERAL HERCULES DE LA REY.

THE Federals lost no time in resolving to meet the enemy after war had been declared. At midnight, on the 11th of October, in a downpour of rain, Joubert's forces rode in three columns over the frontier of Natal, at Laing's Nek, Botha's Pass, and a drift over the Buffalo River. The invading commandoes comprised the Middelburg, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Krugersdorp, Heidelberg, Ermelo, Standerton, Wakkerstroom, Utrecht, and Vryheid burghers, the Hollander Corps, and Blake's Irish Brigade.

At the same midnight hour on the 11th, De la Rey, at the head of a strong patrol of Cronje's western column, crossed the Bechuanaland border, about twenty miles to the south of Mafeking, on a reconnaissance to discover the strength and possible movements of its garrison.

Cronje's force, numbering some 5,000 men, had been laagered at Polfontein, since being mobilized. It consisted of the Marico, Rustenburg, Potchefstroom, Lichtenburg, and Bloemof commandoes; these being the western districts of the Transvaal which their burghers were called upon to defend under the Boer system of territorial military organization. With these commandoes was a small Scandinavian corps.

This relatively strong force was meant more as a check upon the Mafeking garrison than for any contemplated invasion of the Bechuanaland territory. It was not intended to act as a unit, but to supply such details of men as the movements of the enemy over the border and in Rhodesia might require in the work of stopping any attempted entry into the Transvaal from British possessions west and north. It soon became necessary in the carrying out of this plan, to divide this force into three small divisions; one under De la Rey, one under Commandant Snyman, with the stronger of the three bodies remaining with the old hero of Potchefstroom, *for his* subsequent combats with Methuen, Kitchener, and others.

The initial blunder of the war on the part of the Boer generals was committed in this disposition and division of the western commandoes. It was part of the deplorably short-sighted policy of wasting men and opportunities in watching comparatively small British garrisons. The troops under Baden-Powell in Mafeking would not have ventured to cross the frontier for any serious purpose, nor could the Rhodesian levies inflict much injury upon the thinly-peopled localities in the northwest before assistance from the eastern districts would arrive and hold them in check. Almost a third of the whole Transvaal army was sent to watch a few thousand troops who were cut off from reenforcements, while Joubert was to attempt, with less than double the same number of Cronje's burghers, the invasion of territory held by British forces larger than his own, and which were being increased by every transport arriving from England. A plan similar to Joubert's, which Cronje in part attempted when too late, would have changed the whole fortunes of the war, if carried out simultaneously with the crossing of the Commandant-General into Natal. De Aar Junction, on the main line from Cape Town to Kimberley, was some sixty miles south of the Orange River. Enormous military stores were accumulated there as part of the plan for the British advance on Bloemfontein, with only a weak garrison in defense of the place. Naauwpoort, another railway junction some fifty miles eastward, and near a strong pro-Boer center, could have been taken with comparative ease. The English trembled for the fate of these places in the first week of the war, but the commandoes under

GENERAL JACOB HERCULES DE LA REY

GENERAL SNYMAN

Grobler across the river, and of Prinsloo and Wessels near Be mont and Kimberley, made no move on these vulnerable position Had Cronje advanced south on Kimberley, at the time Joube marched through Laing's Nek, the Diamond City would have bee in the hands of the Federals long before Lord Methuen could hav forced his way past De Aar. The fear of offending a Bond Mini try in Cape Colony was to blame for this disastrous act of omissio

The first encounter of the war occurred at Kraaipan, south Mafeking, and to General De la Rey belongs the credit of securin the initial victory for the cause of the Republic. He had starte from Cronje's laager with two hundred Lichtenburghers befo

THE FIRST SHOTS OF THE WAR—FIRING ON THE ARMORED TRAIN AT KRAAIPAN

artillery had arrived from Pretoria, in order to be over the bord at midnight, and was to await the arrival of Captain Van d Merwe with guns before engaging any force he might locate b tween Vryburg and Mafeking. On reaching the railway statio at Kraaipan he found that the English outposts at that place ha retired on seeing the approach of the Boers. De la Rey, in awai ing the arrival of Van der Merwe, tore up the railway going sout to Kimberley, and cut the telegraph wires.

The object for which the column had crossed the border w accomplished, but De la Rey remained for possible developmen from the direction of Mafeking. His scouts soon discovered a armored train steaming from the south towards the railway statio This mobile fort consisted of an engine and two trucks lined wit bullet-proof armor sheeting, and was armed with a Maxim an

two mountain guns. The "fort" bore down upon the station at Kraaipan during the evening of the 12th of October, the officer in command being evidently ignorant of the damage done to the railway line. The engine and trucks capsized on reaching the derailed spot, but not so completely as to prevent the surprised occupants from trying to replace the train on the rails. This the Boers easily succeeded in preventing by their rifle fire. The English were enabled, however, to use their mountain guns and Maxim, and by this means to keep De la Rey at a respectful distance during the night.

The official report of this opening engagement of the war, as sent by General Cronje to Pretoria, was as follows :

"General De la Rey on his arrival at Kraaipan found that all the British troops and police had fled to Mafeking.

"He immediately tore up the railway lines on both sides of the station, and also cut the telegraph wires.

"In the evening a locomotive with two wagons, protected by iron work, was seen approaching the derailed spot.

"On reaching it the locomotive capsized, together with the wagons.

"The burghers prevented the train from being replaced on the rails, and were successful in their efforts throughout the night.

"Meanwhile the enemy kept up a hot fire with a Maxim and two mountain guns.

"The burghers kept strict watch during the night.

"In the morning Captain Van der Merwe arrived with cannon.

"Directly he opened fire with them, the white flag was hoisted, and the enemy surrendered.

"On our side there was no wounded.

"The enemy's casualties were their captain and eight men (slightly) wounded.

"Dum-Dum (Mark IV ?) bullets were found with the enemy."

This account, brief and laconic as it is, as dealing with the first fight of the war, was a lengthy document in comparison with reports of more important engagements in which Cronje took part subsequently. His first "story" of the brilliant victory he gained at Magersfontein was told in a despatch of thirty words. Doubtless the above report was that sent to the old veteran by De la Rey, and transmitted as received by Cronje to the War Department at Pretoria.

The report, it will be seen, is a bald statement of facts. There is not a word of self-praise or of Boer glorification in it. The details of the encounter are related in the restrained and sober language which has invariably characterized the utterances of these maligned people in their dealings with their enemy.

As a sample of the contrary spirit which has prevailed in almost every phase of this war, the spirit of boastful achievement, of Falstaffian exaggeration on the British side, the following account of the Kraaipan affair, which appeared in the British press, is interesting.

The Kimberley war news man's history of the fight at the train reads as follows:

"Kimberley, Friday Afternoon.—The armored train to which the disaster happened was a small one, and it was sent from Mafeking on Thursday morning for the purpose of repairing the telegraph lines which had been cut by the Boers.

"It was commanded by Captain Nesbit, and the crew consisted of fifteen men of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Field Force and a skilled telegraphist.

"The train was named the Mosquito.

"All went well until the train was nearing Kraaipan, where the telegraph break had been localized.

"At that point the look-out man saw a Boer battery (!) posted in a position commanding the track.

"Captain Nesbit determined to make a run for it, and putting on full steam made the attempt.

"The Boer artillery (!) opened fire, and almost simultaneously a mine (!) exploded beneath the track, and in another moment the armored train was off the rails.

"Captain Nesbit and his men took up positions and commenced to return the Boer fire.

"The Boers steadily pounded the train with shell (!) and Nesbit and his men pluckily replied.

"The unequal fight lasted for four hours. At the end of that time there was no longer any response from the Mosquito, and the Boers then advanced and took possession of what was left of it.

"It is known that the Boers lost heavily (!)

"The list of casualties on our side has not been received, but there is too much reason to fear that Captain Nesbit and all his men, including the civilian telegraphist, perished at their posts." (!!)

Various editors of London Jingo papers, not to be outdone by the Kimberley historian in the eulogy of Nesbit and his men, declared that such bravery as theirs, in "dying at their posts in preference to surrender, added another glorious chapter to English military annals." When the truth had a chance of competing with the war correspondents and their editorial rivals, it was found that Captain Nesbit's thumb had been slightly injured in the encounter, and that all his men were prisoners, practically unhurt, in the hands of the Boers, having hoisted the white flag.

THE ARMORED TRAIN CAPTURED AT KRAAIPAN

Armored trains as novelties in actual warfare were destined not to perform the feats which the English counted upon in their construction. The idea sought to be carried out was to build a mobile fort for patrol and reconnaissance purposes, and for the repairing of railways when damaged by the Boers. It seemed not to occur to the military minds who planned these machines that the displacement of a single rail in front or behind the locomotive would place the trucks, their defenders, and guns at the mercy of an attacking party. They were also built in ignorance of the penetrating power of the Creusot field gun and of the Maxim-Nordenfelt, and have in consequence been a complete failure in the war.

These trains consisted of two or more carriages sheeted over with

MOUNTAIN GUNS CAPTURED AT KRAAIPAN MANNED BY STAATS ARTILLERY

three-quarter inch boiler iron. The engine was placed between the trucks and protected with armor plating, the cab being roofed over by similar covering. Each truck was fitted to hold some fifty men, with loopholes for machine guns and slots for rifle fire.

GENERAL DE LA REY

Jacob Hercules De la Rey, who fought the first successful engagement of the war, first saw the light in the district of Lichtenburg fifty-four years ago. His father was born in the Orange Free State and was of Huguenot origin. He took part with Pretorius in driving the English out of Bloemfontein in 1848, and had his farm and property confiscated after Sir Harry Smith had reversed the situation by forcing the old Boer warrior back again across the Vaal. The De la Reys sought a new home in the west of the Transvaal, where Jacob Hercules spent his early life. The general is

a man over the medium height, sinewy in build, and remarkable for his quiet, dignified manner. He has deep-set, dark eyes, a prominent Roman nose, and a large, dark brown beard, giving to his face a strong, handsome, and patrician expression.

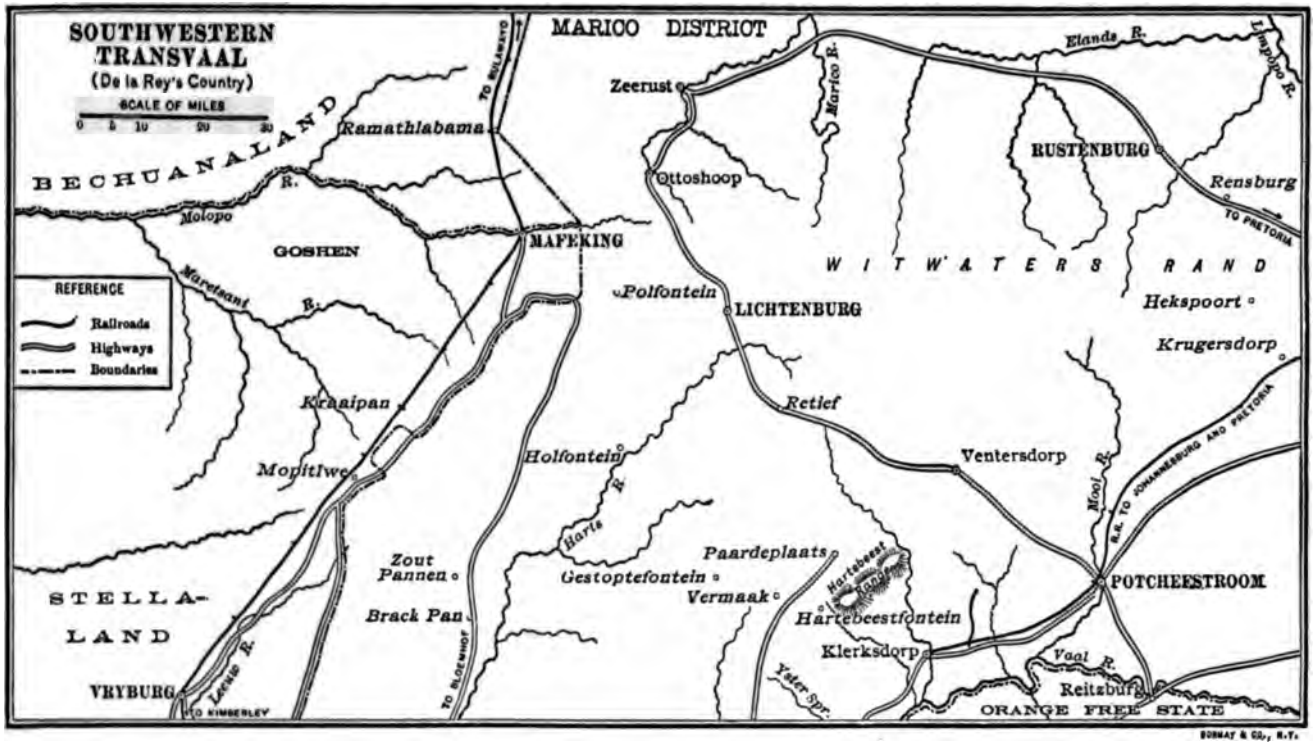
He was born of a fighting family, and has had the experience and training of campaigns in conflicts with hostile Kaffir tribes. His first command was in the war which the English incited the Basutos to wage against the Free State in the early sixties, when he was quite young. These experiences qualified him for a prominent military position when the present war broke out, and he was unanimously elected to the command of the Lichtenburg burghers who became part of Cronje's western column.

He represented his native district in the Volksraad for ten years, and was a consistent supporter of the Joubert, as against the Kruger, following in that Assembly. He favored a large franchise concession to the Uitlanders as a means of averting a conflict with England, but soon saw that a demand for political reforms was only a pretext for precipitating a conflict. He was one of the most ardent advocates of an attacking as against a defensive military policy when England forced a resort to hostilities.

Like General Cronje, he carries no weapons in the field. His field-glass, wooden pipe, and, last but not least, his Bible, are his inseparable companions. He is a universal favorite with the burghers of both Republics, and inspires great confidence in his men by his almost unerring military judgment, splendid generalship, heroic courage, an indomitable tenacity of purpose, and an all-round resourcefulness in all emergencies.

He is remarkably self-contained in his actions, never getting excited, even in the thickest of the fight, but always remaining cool, cautious, and alert.

Colonel Baden-Powell essayed a double blow at his assailants on the day of the catastrophe to Captain Nesbit's armored train at Kraaipan. Learning of the approach of another body of Boers, towards a point on the line about a dozen miles north of Mafeking, he despatched two trucks laden with dynamite, and hauled by an engine to the locality. On nearing the place occupied by a party of Marico burghers, the engine driver unhooked his engine, let his trucks run forward, and then retraced his way, safely, back to Mafeking. The Boers fired upon the trucks, as was expected, and a terrible explosion followed. Powell's calculation was not, however, realized. The wary Boers did not approach the trucks as near as their chivalrous foe had hoped for and anticipated, the result being a great waste of dynamite on the British side, with no loss to the objects of this savagely-devised plan of slaughter.


SOUTHWESTERN TRANSVAAL
(De la Rey's Country)
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
BECHUANALAND
MARICO DISTRICT
Ramathlabama
TO BULAWAYO
Zeerust
Marico R.
Elands R.
Limpopo R.
RUSTENBURG
Rensburg
TO PRETORIA
Ottoshoop
Molopo R.
GOSHEN
MAFEKING
Maretsant R.
WITWATERS RAND
Polfontein
LICHTENBURG
Hekspoort
Krugersdorp
Kraaipan
Retief
Mopitlwe
Holfontein
Ventersdorp
Mooi R.
R.R. TO JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA
Harts R.
Paardeplaats
Zout Pannen
Gestoptefontein
Vermaak
Hartebeest Range
Hartebeestfontein
POTCHEFSTROOM
STELLA-LAND
Brack Pan
Klerksdorp
Vaal R.
Yster Spr.
Reitzburg
VRYBURG
Leeuw R.
TO KIMBERLEY
TO BLOEMHOF
ORANGE FREE STATE
BURMAY & CO., N.Y.

The first prisoners taken in the war were the men who had been captured at Kraaipan by General De la Rey, after the fight over the armored train. They were kindly treated by their captors, on their own admission, and sent on to General Cronje's head laager at Polfontein. Cronje telegraphed to Pretoria for instructions as to what action he was to take with these prisoners, intimating in the same message that he favored their being put over the border upon swearing they would not take up arms again against the Republics. The Executive at Pretoria instructed the general to forward his prisoners to the capital. Cronje's generous impulse and soldierly desire did him great credit. The day was to come when very little of the same consideration would be shown towards himself by his foes. The future prisoner of St. Helena had not yet learned that nothing even akin to soldierly chivalry was to be expected on the side of the forces fighting for England. In ordering the general to send his prisoners to Pretoria, the Executive were not unmindful of the obligations on which civilized warfare insists in the treatment of captured foes. By the special order of President Kruger, Field Cornet Meintjes was despatched to Lichtenburg with a mule-wagon load of refreshments for the use of the prisoners during the journey to the Boer capital.

Chapter X

THE ADVANCE ON DUNDEE

INVASION OF NATAL—JOUBERT'S COMMANDOES AND PLANS—THE ENGLISH FORCES IN DUNDEE AND LADYSMITH—SCENE OF THE IMPENDING BATTLE DESCRIBED—TALANA HILL—SKETCH OF GENERAL LUKAS MEYER.

WHILE events were taking place, as related, on the Western border, the main burgher forces, under the immediate command of Joubert, had moved southward into Natal, across the pass known as Laing's Nek. Not expecting any serious attempt on the part of the enemy to defend Charlestown, the Commandant-General had Newcastle as his objective; a small town distant about twenty-five miles from Laing's Nek, and where a body of Colonial troops had been for some time watching for movements from the Transvaal. Charlestown had also been occupied by the British, but they fell back on Newcastle on learning of the advance of General Jan Kock through Botha's Pass with the Johannesburg and Rand commandoes. The village was found by the Boers to have been looted by Kaffirs and Coolies after the departure of the English forces.

The country through which the burghers were to force their way to meet the enemy is remarkable for its superb mountain scenery and for its historic associations. The road from Standerton through Volksrust crosses the Drakensberg range and goes on to Newcastle and Ladysmith by the pass of Laing's Nek. The Nek is over 4,000 feet above the level of the sea, and is an opening in the range seven miles long, which ends on the west in an imposing mountain with precipitous sides and some wooded ravines. This hill is Majuba. The summit is more or less table-shaped, and the view from it embraces the magnificent alpine prospect of the towering Drakensbergs to the west and south, and a country of diversified picturesqueness to the east, with defiles and valleys through which the Buffalo River winds its way southward to the Tugela; separating in its course the Utrecht and Vryheid (Transvaal) districts from the northeastern frontier of Natal—a country of mountains and ridges, of kopjes, valleys, and grassy plateaus, with its bracing altitudes and inspiring natural panorama. Down from these heights,

and past Majuba, Joubert and his burghers rode resolutely on the 12th and 13th of October to encounter the forces of the British Empire and to decide again, and perhaps forever, whether Boer or Briton shall rule the Transvaal.

While the Commandant-General was advancing upon the English positions from the north by the direct road from Volksrust, a small force under Field Cornet Botha, forming part of the Vryheid commando, had crossed the Natal border at De Jager's Drift, on the Buffalo River, on a reconnaissance. Six frontier police were taken without any resistance by Botha's men on touching Natal soil, and he thus shared with De la Rey the credit of making the first haul of British prisoners.

COMMANDANT ERASMUS

On the 15th of October scouts brought tidings to Newcastle of the British positions to the south as far as Glencoe Junction and Dundee. The enemy's outposts at Dannhauser, on the railway line twelve miles south of Newcastle, had fallen back on Glencoe on learning that Jan Kock and Viljoen's column of Johannesburgers had swept southward over the Biggarsberg to the west of Glencoe, and were believed to be intent on forming a junction with Prinsloo's Free Staters, who had entered Natal through Van Reenan's Pass. The main British camp was located on the road from Glencoe Junction to Dundee, where General Penn Symons was in command of a combined infantry and cavalry force estimated at 6,000 men, and four batteries of field artillery.

It was decided by the Boer generals to make an attack upon Penn Symons on the morning of Friday, the 20th, from two hills, one to the east and one to the northwest of Dundee, which the English had left unguarded on the flanks of their position. General Lukas Meyer, with 2,500 burghers and four guns, was to advance on the Transvaal side of Buffalo River as far as Doornberg, east of Dundee, and in a night march from thence to reach Craigside, or Talana Hill, on the early morning of the appointed day.

Commandant Erasmus, with 3,000 men and Trichardt's artillery, was to proceed south from Dannhauser along the railway, and, striking eastward from the line a few miles north of Glencoe, make (also under cover of a night march) for the heights of Impati, which overlooked the British position to the west; the plan being to deliver a simultaneous blow at Penn Symons from the hills to his right and left.

From telegrams left behind at Dundee after the battle about to be described, and which fell into Boer hands, the English general appeared to be in complete ignorance of Joubert's movements up to the 18th. He was also uncertain as to his ability to hold the place if attacked by the Boers. The following messages were sent by him to General White and to the Chief of Staff at Ladysmith:

"Glencoe Camp, October 18th.

"From G.O.C. to Chief of Staff, Ladysmith.

"1.35.—Large body of Boers reported by our patrols to be at Dannhauser. Our Basuto scouts say that they have seven guns with them, and that they are coming straight here to attack us. Our patrols are watching them now, and I have sent out a squadron of cavalry in support. Dannhauser is 14 miles from this camp. Dundee was cleared last night of undesirable men."

"9.45.—Last patrol from the north has come in. There were no Boers at Dannhauser at 6 p.m. The officer in charge was told that many of the enemy at Ingagane had gone back to Newcastle. As a result of further inquiries I am convinced that, unless more rain falls, from want of water Dundee could not be invested by a large force for any length of time."

It will be seen from this official message of the English general that armed Kaffirs (all scouts are necessarily armed) were used by the English from the very outbreak of the war.

It appears from the following telegram that General White had contemplated the withdrawal of Penn Symons and his force from Dundee, on learning of the advance of Kock and Viljoen southward of Glencoe. The rapid advance of Joubert's column from Newcastle on the 19th frustrated this intention.

The telegram reads :

"Glencoe Camp, 18th October, 3.26 a.m.

"From General Symons to Sir George White, Ladysmith.

"1.33.—Urgent. Clear the line. I cannot fulfil the conditions you impose, namely, to strongly entrench myself here with an assured water supply within my position. I must therefore comply

with your order to retire. Please to send trains to remove civilians that will remain in Dundee, our stores, and sick. I must give out that I am moving stores and camp to Glencoe Junction in view of attacking Newcastle at once.

"W. P. SYMONS, L.G."

The egregious Moneypenny, of the Johannesburg "Star," was likewise at fault in his journalistic scouting for the London "Times" at Dundee, but from the concluding words in the following message it would appear that if he knew nothing about the movements of the Boers he still knew how to libel them :

"From Moneypenny, to 'Times,' London.

"Glencoe Camp, October 18th.—Attack this position, which thought possible last few days, seems not likely take place. No evidence enemy in force this side Newcastle, and patrols report small party which advanced Ingagane retiring. Vryheid commando believed near Landman's Drift. Reports state general drunkenness, laxity discipline, Boer camp Newcastle."

The British Military Censor was also already at work in his task of limiting the information which the British public was to be permitted to receive from English war correspondents, where they did not speak exclusively of British achievements. The following censored message fell into Boer hands at Glencoe :

"From Cumming, to 'Advertiser,' London.

"Report reached camp that Boers had been sighted seven miles out. Squadron 18th Hussars, under command Major Laming, rode out. The advanced officers' patrol under Lieutenant Cape, on reaching brow of hill beyond Hattingh Spruit Station, discovered strong advance party of enemy. (Censored: 'The Hussars patrol fell back, and Boers advancing swiftly poured in a scattering fire without dismounting at 400 yards.')"

Dundee is a pretty little town with about a hundred and fifty dwellings, three or four churches, and two or three small hotels. It is situated at the northeastern extremity of a semicircular area, almost surrounded by hills. The railway from Glencoe Junction cuts across this stretch of rugged veldt, which is also intersected by a spruit, a branch tributary of a small river that falls into the Buffalo a few miles east of the town. The distance across the plain from Glencoe to Dundee—that is, from southwest to east—is about seven miles; while the north to south distance is some five or six miles.

To the east of Dundee, at a distance of about three thousand

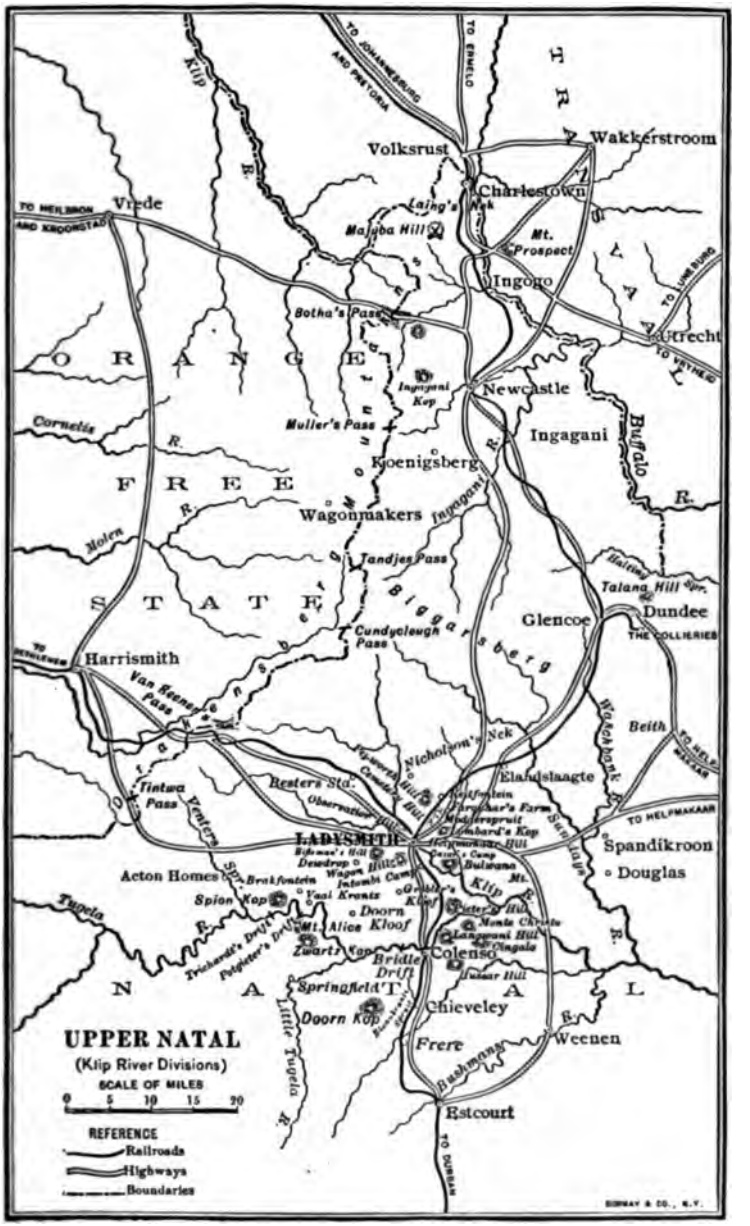
yards, rises a square-topped hill to a height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the level of the town. To reach this hill from the town, you descend a sloping road for about a mile, and, crossing a small spruit and wire fence, you begin to ascend the grassy slopes of Talana Hill. On the side of the hill facing Dundee there is a plantation, some two hundred yards square, of closely-planted trees. The plantation does not reach to the top of the hill. To the right and left of these trees pathways lead to the summit of Talana, while an irregular fence of loose stones stretches across the face of the hill, starting from the wood and going round to the crest of the northern extremity.

Talana slopes down on the right (still looking at the hill from Dundee) over a nek to another kopje, at the foot of which there are some coal mines, about three miles south of the town. Beyond these mines the ground rises again to the Biggarsberg range in the direction of Helpmaakar and Ladysmith. Between the coal mines and Talana Hill, a roadway passes over the nek from Dundee, under the base of the hill, leading on to De Jager's Drift, across the Buffalo River and into the Transvaal.

To the left of Talana Hill (looking from Dundee) there rises Impati Hill; a valley three or four miles wide running in between the two hills towards Doornberg. Impati, like Talana, commands the town of Dundee completely, being about 6,000 yards away to the northwest. Impati at its highest point rises 1,000 feet above the level of the town, but a spur on its southern slope, in the direction of Glencoe, stands no higher than 400 or 500 feet over the ground on which the English camp was pitched. The camp was located on a spot gradually rising from the town, and on its western side, distant about 2,000 yards, in the direction of Glencoe.

Why a position was chosen on which to meet the advancing Boers that was dominated by two hills in the immediate direction of their march, has not been explained in any English account of the two battles of Talana Hill and Dundee. It was possibly done in ignorance of the fact of the Boers possessing artillery with a range equal to the distance from Impati to General Penn Symons' location. In any case, there was no natural advantage in the English position which could not have been found anywhere behind, nearer to Glencoe. Two miles further away from Impati would have taken the British army beyond the reach of artillery on either hill, while it would have given the English general's mounted troops better ground on which to act if the Boer column should venture an attack on the town of Dundee from the Doornberg direction.

Another unexplained fact is even stranger still: no scouts had


UPPER NATAL
(Klip River Divisions)
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 15 20
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
ORANGE FREE STATE
NATAL
TRANSVAAL
Volksrust
Wakkerstroom
Charlestown
Vrede
Ingogo
Utrecht
Newcastle
Ingagani
Koenigsberg
Wagonmakers
Harrismith
Glencoe
Dundee
Elandslaagte
LADYSMITH
Spandikroon
Douglas
Acton Homes
Colenso
Chieveley
Weenen
Estcourt
Klip R.
Buffalo R.
Tugela R.
Little Tugela R.
Bushmans R.
Ingagani R.
Wanchbank R.
Sundays R.
Cornelis R.
Molen R.
Tintwa Pass
Van Reenen Pass
Tandjes Pass
Cundycleugh Pass
Muller's Pass
Botha's Pass
Laing's Nek
Majuba Hill
Mt. Prospect
Ingagani Kop
Talana Hill
Nicholson's Nek
Beith
Spion Kop
Doorn Kloof
Mt. Alice
Zwartz Kop
Bridle Drift
Springfield
Doorn Kop
Frere
Bulwana Mt.
Monte Christo
Langwani Hill
Cingalo
Buzzar Hill
Resters Sta.
Observation Hill
Cemetery Hill
Wagon Hill
Intombi Camp
Vaal Krantz
Brakfontein
Dewdrop
Bifeman's Hill
Cesar's Camp
Lombard's Kop
Helpmakaar Hill
Kleinfontein
Farquhar's Farm
Modderspruit
Ventersburg
Trichardt's Drift
Potgieter's Drift
Klip R.
Sunday's R.
Wanchbank R.
TO JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA
TO ERMELO
TO HEILBRON AND KROONSTAD
TO LUNEBURG
TO VRYHEID
TO HELPMAKAAR
TO DURBAN
THE COLLIERIES
SIDEWAY & CO., N.Y.

been placed on either of the commanding hills to the right and left of the British camp! Two very unpleasant surprises, therefore, awaited the enemy, when, at five in the morning of the 20th of October, Captain Pretorius, of the Transvaal Artillery, sent a Creusot shell from the top of Talana Hill across the town of Dundee, clean into General Penn Symons' tents. The Boers were on the hill, and they possessed guns which could easily search the British position.

GENERAL MEYER

Lukas Johannes Meyer, who was to fight the first pitched battle of the war with the English as Commandant of the Southeastern Transvaal burghers, was born in 1851 in the Orange Free State. He removed in early life to Natal, and ultimately settled in the Vryheid district, near the Zulu border. He commanded a small force under Joubert in the War of Freedom in 1881, and was seriously wounded at Ingogo, in one of the encounters with General Colley's troops. A few years subsequently he volunteered along with some other adventurous spirits to fight for the Zulu chief, Dinizulu, in the latter's campaign against a rival claimant for Cetewayo's kingship of the warrior race of Dingaan and Chaka, and the victorious son of Cetewayo rewarded Meyer for his services by presenting him with the section of Zululand which was wedged in between the south of Swaziland and the northeast of Natal.

GENERAL MEYER

Meyer, being of an ambitious and romantic disposition, formed his territory into a small State, which he called "The New Republic." A large number of Boers from the Transvaal and Africanders from Cape Colony migrated to the new Boer country. Meyer, however, soon relinquished the idea of ruling a State by himself, and obtained the consent of his fellow-burghers to join their territory to that of the Transvaal. He was elected to represent the Vryheid district, the locality of the "New Republic," in the Volksraad at

Pretoria, and had graduated by ability and popularity to the position of Chairman of the First Raad a few years before war was declared. He went to the front as Speaker of the Boer House of Commons.

Lukas Meyer has a striking appearance, being six feet four in height, and built in proportion, with a strong, handsome face, markedly German in features and expression. He is a man of good education, with cultured tastes, and was immensely popular among the Boers of his district, with whom he was known as "the Lion of Vryheid."

Daniel Erasmus, who at the head of the Pretoria and other commandoes, was to have cooperated with General Meyer in the attack on Dundee, had no record or qualification for his election to the position of Commandant other than his wealth. He is a tall, heavy-looking, dark man, aged about fifty, and unsoldierly in appearance.

Chapter XI

BATTLE OF TALANA HILL

BOER AND BRITISH POSITIONS—FAILURE OF COMMANDANT ERASMUS TO ARRIVE—GENERAL MEYER FIGHTS PENN SYMONS—THE BATTLE DESCRIBED—THE BRITISH CLAIM TO VICTORY EXAMINED—FORCES EMPLOYED AND RESULTS OF BATTLE CONSIDERED—CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES—FACTS AND FIGURES DENY THE BRITISH CLAIM.

THE selection of Dundee as a base for a large British force operating in the north of Natal was most unwise from a military standpoint. It was easily open to attack by a force from the east, through the Utrecht and Vryheid districts of the Transvaal, while the railway line on the west, from Newcastle to Glencoe, offered a very favorable means for the march of a cooperating column. In fact, the whole plan of defending Natal north of the Tugela with less than an army of 50,000 troops, against an invading force of 10,000 burghers, was wanting in the most elementary generalship.

The country between Laing's Nek and the Tugela River has the Free State on the immediate west, with the Drakensberg mountains acting as boundary; and the Transvaal on the immediate east, having the Buffalo River and hilly country as dividing line. This section of Natal resembles in formation a triangle, with the base at the Tugela and the apex at Laing's Nek; having a depth of ninety or a hundred miles, and a width at the base of fifty or sixty. For forty miles of the east depth, the Transvaal border is crossed by drifts over the Buffalo River, which offer little difficulty to a Boer army; while Van Reenan's Pass, on the west side of the triangle, gave the Free Staters a safe way for a cooperating force to march, with flanks secured by impassable mountains, to the aid of a column moving south along the opposite side of the triangle.

The section of Natal included in this triangle is an ideal country for Boer methods of warfare. It abounds in strong positions, in kopjes and kloofs, with its western boundary made unassailable by the towering walls of the Drakensberg range.

The resolve to defend Dundee was, therefore, most unwise in itself, while the attempted defense, which was made on the 20th and 21st of October, was foredoomed to utter failure.

Reasons other than strategic must have determined the selection of this town for a stand-up fight with the advancing Boers. These reasons might have had their inspiration in the existence of coal mines needing protection, or in the fact that the little town had been made a depot for an enormous amount of military stores. Political considerations were probably the essential factor in determining the unwise proceeding. The position of the farmers, traders, and others in this portion of "the Garden Colony" had to be thought of in Pietermaritzburg. The public promise made some months previously by the Governor, on the inspiration of the Colonial Office, "that Natal, if attacked, will be defended by all the forces of the Empire," was, doubtless, the real cause of cooping up General Penn Symons and his men in the position in which, but for the failure of Commandant Erasmus to carry out his part of the Boer plan of attack on the 20th, the entire British force would have been captured or destroyed.

GENERAL LUKAS MEYER AT TALANA HILL

General Joubert remained at Dannhauser on the 19th and 20th.

Lukas Meyer, with burghers from eight commandoes, namely, Utrecht. Vryheid, Ermelo, Wakkerstroom, Piet Retief, Krugersdorp, Middelburg, and Bethel, numbering 2,500 men, marched from Doornberg during the night of Thursday, the 19th. The weather was wet and cold, but the long night's ride of twenty miles was successfully performed. The march was continued in silence, and the north side of Talana Hill was reached about two in the morning of Friday. Dividing his force into three divisions, Meyer disposed them as follows: The right was to hold the northern end of the valley running in between Impati and Talana. The center was to occupy the hilltop, and the left was extended to a circular kopje behind the coal mines to the south, and was to prevent an outflanking movement by way of the neck where the railway line crossed from the coal mines in the direction of Landman's Drift on the Buffalo River. The four guns were hauled up the side of Talana

by willing hands, and were placed near the crest immediately overlooking Dundee; Captain Pretorius being in charge of the small battery, which consisted of one Krupp quick-firer, two fifteen-pound Creusots, and one pom-pom.

Anxious eyes looked to the west across the valley to Impati heights as the sun began to roll up the morning mists from hill and plain. Nothing, however, was visible except the bold outline of the unoccupied hill against the dark gray sky. There was no sign of Erasmus! Away right in front lay Dundee, a tempting target on the plain right under the hill, while the white tents of Penn Symons' army dotted the veldt about a mile beyond the town; whether reachable by the yet untested French fifteen-pounder remained an unsolved problem for the dark, flashing eye of Pretorius.

The light was growing, five o'clock arrived, but still no sight of the Pretoria column. Suddenly the sharp crack of a Mauser was heard on the right, and some British outposts were seen hurriedly retiring in the direction of Dundee. The enemy had discovered the Boers who were holding the valley, and the battle could no longer be delayed.

Pretorius trained his Creusots on the British camp, and sent his first pair of shells over the town, right into the center of the enemy's position, some three miles away. The response to this "top of the morning" salute from Talana Hill was instant. The English guns belched forth their reply, and soon the side of the hill was being pounded by the British artillery.

It was found, after nearly two hours' firing, that Penn Symons' guns failed to reach the Boer center on Talana. His batteries were, therefore, moved into new positions, nearer to the hill; a change of plan on the part of the English general which would have been all but impossible had Erasmus, with Trichardt's battery, occupied the Impati heights, to the British left, as arranged.

It was a daring move, but the overwhelming force by which the guns were protected on the one hand, and the fewness of General Meyer's guns on the other, encouraged the operation. The fire of the enemy's batteries from their new and nearer position began to tell upon the Boer lines on the head of the hill, and necessitated a withdrawal of their artillery further back from the crest of the mountain. The British fire was, however, generally ineffective; a great number of the shells going fifty feet above the heads of the burghers. Captain Pretorius handled his little battery with admirable coolness, and developed a much greater accuracy of aim than did his British adversaries below.

It was soon seen from the hilltop what General Penn Symons' plan of operations was to be. Under cover of his numerous guns,

he sent out three attacking columns; two composed of cavalry and mounted infantry, with guns, to turn the flanks of the Boers to the right and left of Meyer's position on Talana; one to sweep in south of the circular kopje, near the coal mine; the other to rush the valley, to Meyer's right, between Talana and Impati; while the third, composed of the Dublin Fusiliers, Royal Rifles, and Royal Irish Fusiliers, was to work up the slope of Talana, facing Dundee, under the shelter of Smith's plantation and a loose stone wall which crossed diagonally the face of the hill from the east to the north. This main attack on Meyer's center was to be covered by the play of the enemy's guns from the new position in front of Dundee.

There was practically a simultaneous move forward by the three attacking columns, and, as they cleared from the shelter of their camp and the town, and came out on the open to the south, east, and north of Dundee, the Boer guns played upon them with deadly effect, while several hundred of the Utrecht and Middelburg commandoes on the west of Talana moved down the hill, under cover of the wall and plantation, and poured a searching rifle fire into the center attacking column. This body of troops suffered severely by this counter attack, and already the grass on Smith's fields, over which the Irish Fusiliers were moving, was being dyed with blood. The British raced for the shelter of the trees, into which cover Pretorius now sent his pom-pom shells with unerring aim.

It was at this critical stage in the combat that the English general entered the zone of fire, and ultimately received his death wound. He had marked the advance of the Fusiliers and Royals across the spruit and into the plantation, where they remained. He saw also the steady fire from Talana into the trees, and it looked as if the column were about to be hurled back, despite the incessant play of his batteries upon the Boer position. He then rode rapidly across the open space at the base of the hill, and entered the plantation. He left his horse, and, addressing the Fusiliers and Royals, urged them to charge the hill. Encouraged by this example and appeal, the men went forward again and gained the shelter of the upper wall of loose stones which, starting from the top end of the plantation, went round slantingly towards the north, or right, of the Boer center on Talana. To make this advance in face of a galling fire, I have been assured by Boer officers that the British officers, revolver in hand, had frequently to threaten their men unless they moved upward. Officers in every instance had to lead the way, and this accounts for the extraordinary proportion of men of rank who fell in the fight. Boers who fought in the commandoes which defended Meyer's center have related that

several British officers were shot down from behind while pointing their weapons towards their own men in order to induce them to advance.

The Boers contested every yard of the ground, firing from behind any cover which presented itself, and making gaps in the ranks of the climbing Fusiliers. At one point, a little to the north of the end of the plantation, where the stone wall approached a hollow in the side of the hill, a body of burghers lay waiting. On the British approaching within a hundred yards of the place a deadly volley was poured into them, which sent those of them who survived down the hill again towards the shelter of the wood. It was at this juncture in the fortunes of the advancing British column that the English gunners missed their mark most disastrously, as has happened with the British artillery at almost every subsequent big engagement. They were signaled to from below the plantation to fire on the cleft in the face of the hill, where the Boers lay concealed. At that very moment the fire from these burghers was compelling the advancing Tommies to race back for the protection of the trees, and, just as they were doubling down the side of the hill, shells from their own batteries fell among them, killing eight men and wounding more.

It was a few minutes before this British artillery blunder that General Penn Symons received a mortal wound in the stomach from a rifle bullet. He was returning from the cover of Smith's wood to the foot of the hill to rejoin his staff when he was shot, and had to be taken into Smith's farmhouse. The injury to their general was unknown to most of the troops in front or to those of the right and left columns, until after the fight had finished.

In the meantime Penn Symons' right column went round by the coal mine and engaged a small Boer force which had been placed on the round kopje to protect the left flank of Meyer's central position. A body of these Boers came down from the hill and engaged the British troops. They were soon outflanked, and had to retire on the neck connecting the kopje with Talana, leaving seventeen prisoners in the hands of the English and suffering the loss of six killed. They had checked, however, the movement which was intended to turn Meyer's left flank.

The column which had been sent forward to turn the Boer right met with a repulse. The Wakkerstroom commando was guarding this position vigilantly as a fog commenced to descend upon the battle-field. They awaited the approach of the Hussars and Fusiliers, fired into them at 500 yards, and then charged them at the east extremity of the valley, capturing a Maxim, and compelling them to retreat. The men who charged numbered only

twenty-five, but the fog concealed the smallness of the force from the British, while the volleys of supporting Mauser fire from the higher ground behind completed the discomfiture of the English column and drove them into the fog.

It was this column, thus driven back, that did not return to Dundee. They wandered in the mist, which now commenced to fall rapidly on the field of battle, and found themselves on the north side of Impati Hill that evening, where they fell in with some men of Trichardt's commando and of Blake's Irish Brigade,

BOER SCOUTS WITH CAPTURED BRITISH MOUNTAIN GUN

who were in search of the battle-field, and were driven by them into a cattle kraal, fought, and captured.

The artillery ammunition failing, and the non-arrival of Erasmus, caused General Meyer to give orders to retire to his base. The 900 men of his center, who had borne the brunt of the fight for seven hours, fell back, with guns and equipment intact, without confusion, before a single British soldier had reached the crest of Talana. A thick fog had fallen over the battle-field, which shut completely out from view the enemy's movements below the hill.

It was for these three reasons that the Boer general retired behind the Buffalo River. He was to learn on the morrow that he had, in reality, won a victory without knowing it.

Captain Nugent, with two bullets in his body, was the first Britisher to gain the top of the hill. There was not a single Boer in sight when the Fusiliers had worked their way round to the crest

by the shelter of the loose stone wall. No Englishman had reached the hilltop while a single Boer remained upon it. There was, therefore, no "brilliant charge" such as has been described in the British press; no performance like that which the imagination of the English war correspondents had alone witnessed; no vaunted application of "cold steel" to which the spirit of boastful invention had given the credit of finally deciding the bloody issue of the day on the summit of the mountain.

The fortunes of the fight are to be determined, not by the statements of correspondents, but by the results of the battle. Captain Nugent was a prisoner in the hands of the Boers within forty-eight hours, as were 250 more of his wounded companions; including the general who had inspired the attack on the hill by his courage and exhortation.

Down from the top to the bottom of the mountain British dead and wounded lay, almost at every yard, showing how dearly the Fusiliers and Royal Rifles had paid for their fruitless climbing of the fiercely-contested hillside. In and around Piet Smith's farmstead, over fifty British killed were found, and in a quiet corner of the small plantation, under the shade of the rocking trees, in the branches of which the doves were telling their tales of love, I have seen the graves of these men, side by side with some of the Boers who had killed them in battle—in a battle fought by the unfortunate "Tommies" for the capitalists and schemers of London and Johannesburg.

The number of Boer killed and wounded was accurately accounted for when Erasmus entered Dundee on the Monday following the battle of Talana. The list, according to each commando engaged, was compiled and published as follows:

Commando	Wounded	Killed
Utrecht	32	13
Middelburg	15	9
Wakkerstroom	12	9
Piet Retief	12	5
Staats Artillery	11	..
Bethel	3	4
Krugersdorp	3	2
Vryheid	2	1
Outside	1	1
	91	44

Adding to these numbers the 17 burghers who were taken prisoner in the encounter near the coal mine, but were subsequently abandoned on the retreat from Dundee, the total Boer casualties in the fight on the 20th amounted to 152 men.

On the British side there was a total loss of 60 killed—including General Penn Symons—and 253 wounded. To this list of casualties must be added the 243 Dublin Fusiliers and Hussars who surrendered to Colonel Trichardt after having retreated from the fight with the Wakkerstroom burghers on the extreme right of the Boer central position. Altogether the British casualties reached the total of 556; or more than three times the number on the Boer side.

The forces engaged on both sides, with their relative equipment of artillery, are also a most material factor in deciding to which army the real fruits of victory belonged. The Boer general had a total of 2,500 men under his command, tho it is claimed by Meyer that only 1,700 of these came into action. This claim, however, ignores the services rendered by the commandoes which watched over the right and left wings of his fighting line, protected the horses at the back of Talana, and otherwise rendered indirect and essential aid.

Lukas Meyer had only four guns, but admittedly his fifteen-pounder Creusots and the pom-pom were far more effective in their fire than the whole of Penn Symons' batteries.

On the English side, there were 6,000 men, with 18 guns. The advantages for the British, therefore, were: in men, two to one; and in guns, over four to one.

Against this superiority in strength and equipment, there was the apparent advantage of the Boer position on Talana Hill. This position, however, ought to have been easily turnable by a numerically stronger force from the two vulnerable points to Meyer's left and right, as there were no entrenchments to defend the hill on either its top or sides. Talana was occupied by Lukas Meyer as part of a plan of attack which, if it had been carried out as arranged, would have completely safeguarded his right while menacing with a counter envelopment the left of Penn Symons' camp and position, and the barring of the enemy's only way of retreat to Ladysmith. The failure of Erasmus to appear on Impati exposed Meyer to a defeat which was only averted by the splendid fighting qualities which his small force displayed in a first encounter with an antagonist greatly superior in men and artillery.

The one convincing and conclusive fact, however, which determines the question of which side really won the battle of Talana, is the retreat of the British army from Dundee within thirty hours after the fight; leaving the dead unburied, their wounded general, and 240 wounded officers and men, 240 prisoners, with the entire camp, an enormous quantity of ammunition, and immense stores of provision, in the hands of the Boers.

The fierceness of the Boer attack upon a British army, and the

deadly hail of infantry fire by which it was sustained, were a revelation to the English general and his officers. They had not reckoned upon any such development of Boer fighting qualities from a Republic which Dr. Jameson and a handful of raiders believed five years ago could be overturned in a dash upon Johannesburg or Pretoria. The dead and the wounded on the sides of Talana Hill, the Maxim fire which had never before rained its showers of lead upon British troops, were a rude awakening to those who planned Dundee as a garrison from which North Natal could be defended against the Transvaal until overwhelming numbers should arrive and clear a way to Pretoria. And this was not all which the battle

READY FOR THE ENEMY

of Talana Hill made clear to English officers. It taught the British a more alarming lesson still; namely, the great inferiority of the drilled English soldiers as compared, man for man, with the undisciplined burghers. They found on the morrow of the encounter on Talana that Tommy Atkins, Kiplingized into an invincible warrior for his exploits against savage foes armed with spears, was no match for the first white foeman he has met in combat in this generation. They saw him retreating from a field on which 6,000 of England's best men had been attacked by a force of 2,500 untrained farmers; leaving his dead unburied, his wounded to the mercies of his foe, his provisions and ammunition to the adverse fortune of a pronounced defeat. It was a disastrous experience for British arms, that refusal to fight again on the day after the alleged "brilliant victory" at Dundee, that three days'

and three nights' continuous flight through the passes of the Biggarsberg, in drenching rain and benumbing cold, in preference to holding a selected British battle-field against the Mausers and Maxims of the despised Boers. It was the Boer, and not the Briton, who remained the actual victor at the battle of Talana Hill.

There are many stories of Boer bravery related of this battle. General Meyer has honorably mentioned one which is to the credit of the Wakkerstroom burghers: 25 of these charged the 250 of the Dublin Fusiliers and Hussars, who fled from the encounter, leaving a Maxim gun behind them, and ultimately surrendered at Marais' Farm to 300 of their foes.

A lad named Scheepers, 18 years old, fought with his father, who was mortally wounded in the attack on the Boer right by this English column. The lad was guarding his dying father when the English rode up and made him prisoner. He asked to be allowed to remain, but was refused. Soon after, however, the Wakkerstroomers swept down upon the English, drove them into the fog, and released the boy, who hastened back to where his father lay, now dead. Several boys under 16 took part in this battle.

Lieutenant Mike Du Toit, of the Staats Artillery, was severely wounded early in the fight. He was unable to stand, but refused to be removed from the field. He remained alongside of his pom-poms, and continued to give orders to the gunners, on receiving from them the results of their observations of the enemy's batteries and doings.

I heard a pathetic incident of the battle related when visiting the scene of the conflict in May, 1900. Three days after the fight, a number of British were found dead in Piet Smith's cow shed. They had either crept in there severely wounded, or had been carried there as dead, and left by their comrades. On the place being entered by Boers on the Monday after the battle, a collie dog was found faithfully watching the lifeless body of its owner. It had evidently been there for the three days, giving in its beautiful loyalty a sad instance of how much nobler some instincts of dumb animals are to the vaunted superior virtues of their masters.

Chapter XII

CAPTURE OF DUNDEE

THE ERRATIC MOVEMENTS OF COMMANDANT ERASMUS—ATTACK AND CAPTURE OF DUNDEE—RETREAT OF THE BRITISH, LEAVING THEIR WOUNDED AND BAGGAGE—JOUBERT'S GENERALSHIP AT FAULT—SOME ANECDOTES OF THE BATTLE-FIELD.

THE movements of Commandant Erasmus' column form part of the story of the battle of Talana Hill, and of the British retreat from Dundee. They explain the failure of the Boer plan to completely crush or capture Penn Symons' army, and account for the first big battle-blunder on the Federal side.

The Pretoria, Heidelberg, Standerton, Boxburg, and Ermelo commandoes, under Erasmus' orders, crossed the Buffalo River on the 14th at Newcastle Drift, in all about 3,000 men. They had negotiated the Drakensberg by the Wakkerstroom road in a continuous downpour of rain as a "saddle commando"; that is, with tents and baggage left behind, carrying only rifles and bandoliers, and such food as each man could handle for himself, in a hurried order to march forward; and were suffering from fatigue and exposure on reaching Newcastle. The column started south again on the 17th, with its wagons and tents, accompanied by a battery of artillery, which included a "Long Tom."

The country south of Newcastle drops downward towards Glencoe, having broken ridges to the east and spurs of the Drakensberg to the west, with the picturesque Biggarsberg range of hills crossing from west to east between Glencoe and Ladysmith. A strong patrol was sent ahead to discover the enemy's position, and it was found that Dannhauser, midway between Newcastle and Glencoe, had been evacuated by the English two days previously; the enemy falling back upon their base at Dundee.

Dannhauser was reached and occupied on the 18th, and the burghers were ordered to sleep in their clothes, with horses saddled and everything in readiness for a movement forward in search of the foe, at a moment's notice.

Early on the 19th, amid a heavy rainstorm, the commandoes

received orders to reach Impati heights before daylight the following morning, for the concerted joint attack upon the British at Dundee.

The day continued stormy, and, as night approached, a wet fog added to the difficulties of the march. The column wandered about in search of the appointed hill, and off-saddled for a few hours in the evening at the foot of a kopje which was supposed to be a spur of Impati heights. During the night the column climbed the hill, and awaited the morning, which it was hoped would reveal the British camp, with Lukas Meyer and his burghers on Talana Hill opposite.

When the morning of the 20th came, the fog still shrouded everything in obscurity. To add to the disappointment felt by all the burghers, the sound of cannon was heard to the east, indicating the progress of a conflict not many miles away. The fog continued during the whole day. The force descended in the evening, and took up a position for the night on a lower terrace of the hill. The Fusiliers and Hussars who had had an encounter with the Wakkerstroom burghers in the morning, and had retreated into the fog, were met by two bodies of the Pretoria and Ermelo burghers, numbering 300 men, under Trichardt, who were trying to find the locality of the fighting which had been heard away east. The British column numbered 250, and on finding themselves in face of the Boers they retired to an enclosure near by, where they took up position. Trichardt's men surrounded the kraal, and, on sending a couple of shells into the enclosure, the white flag was raised, and the English surrendered after some twelve of them had been killed and wounded.

An interesting incident occurred at the capture of the roaming British by Colonel Trichardt's men. Among the latter were some thirty men of Blake's Irish Brigade, who, contrary to strict orders, had left the main body of their corps at the base, and had followed the Erasmus commando on learning that fighting was about to take place to the south of Newcastle. These Irishmen, who carried a green flag at their head, manifested a special interest in the Dublin Fusiliers, who formed the bulk of the captured British. Nor were the prisoners less interested in the flag and nationality of some of their captors. A little recrimination occurred between the divided Irish, but did not go beyond a few words of reproach addressed by some of Blake's men to fellow-countrymen who could fight against a small and a republican nation for the power which deprived their common country of self-governing liberties. The Fusiliers, on finding that nothing more unpleasant than a political lecture was to be inflicted upon them for the present, fraternized with the pro-

Boers, to whom they related details of the morning's attack upon the Dundee camp.

On Saturday morning, the 21st, Erasmus found himself between Glencoe and Impati, in the very neighborhood where the encounter between Meyer and Penn Symons had taken place on the previous day. He moved forward at once to the heights he had failed to occupy twenty-four hours earlier, and on reaching the hill overlooking the town of Dundee discovered the whole British camp in great disorder. Trichardt's guns, including his "Long Tom," were trained without delay upon the enemy's position.

Here again Erasmus exhibited his blundering incapacity as a general. He had failed already to cooperate with Meyer in what would have been a crushing defeat of Penn Symons' forces, wedged as they would have been between 6,000 burghers and a dozen guns. The prevalence of fog has been given as the explanation of this failure. The same fog hung over the march of the Meyer commandoes, but did not prevent their reaching Talana Hill in time. This reason is put forward by Erasmus' apologists as an excuse for the first military blunder of the war on the Boer side, but the feeling among officers and men, with whom I discussed this question while on the scene of the battle in May, was that Erasmus could have easily reached the appointed rendezvous on the morning of the 20th, after having heard the guns to the east, had he been spurred by any very strong or very earnest desire to get there. His ignorance of the topography can be pleaded for all it is worth, and the fog adduced as an exculpation of his apparent remissness; but he will be blamed notwithstanding in the Boer mind while the memory of this war lives in Afrikander recollection for having been instrumental in permitting the English to escape destruction or capture at Dundee.

On arriving at Impati heights and observing the demoralized condition of the enemy's forces, a general capable of forming an elementary plan of battle would have thought only of the delivery of a crushing blow at the half-beaten foe. He would have established immediate communications with General Meyer, who had inflicted the damage from which the enemy was suffering, and who was no more than two or three hours' ride from Talana, and would have concerted a renewed attack for the following morning under conditions which would have insured a brilliant triumph for the Republican army. Or, he would have asked Joubert for reenforcements from the rear. No such thought of planning a crushing blow found place in the mind of Erasmus. He ordered an artillery fire upon Dundee from his safe position on the hill, and contented himself with looking on while General Yule transferred his men-

aced camp from its exposed position southward of the railway line, beyond the reach of Trichardt's powerful Creusot gun. The English guns were unable to return the artillery fire with any effect. Their shells fell short of the Boer guns by a couple of thousand yards.

General Yule made no attempt to storm Impati, tho it was far more accessible for the purposes of such an assault than Talana Hill. He had still over 5,000 disciplined men at his command, with three batteries of artillery, but there was no attempt made to grapple at close quarters with Erasmus and his 3,000 undisciplined Boers. Here was a chance for "cold steel," and frontal attack, and a display of British pluck, and all the rest; but the chance was allowed to pass by. The order was not to charge Impati. It was to clear for Ladysmith.

During these hours, when the fate of Penn Symons' army would have been determined by a competent Boer officer, the British Empire was ringing with the news of "the great victory of Dundee"! Majuba was avenged, and another glorious chapter had been added to the annals of England's military glory. These were the tidings of great Jingo joy which London was flashing on its wires to Montreal, to Melbourne, to India. But on that very day, on Saturday, October 21, it was only due to the accident that a man with no military judgment had the command of 3,000 brave and capable burghers; a man who had already failed to carry out the simplest of movements on a momentous occasion—it was owing to this stroke of British good luck that the most damaging blow of the whole war was not struck at 5,000 of the Queen's best troops, at the very spot where the imaginary triumph of the previous day had been won—by the war correspondents and the London editors.

General Yule retreated on Ladysmith after the battle of Talana. He naturally anticipated a junction between Erasmus and Meyer, or the coming up from Dannhauser of the Commandant-General with the reserves from the base of the Boer army, and wisely determined to get away. Further blundering on the part of his foes enabled him to do so. All Saturday was wasted by Erasmus in gazing down from the hill upon the enemy. Joubert was away at Dannhauser, a few miles north of Erasmus, doing nothing in particular with the reserve burghers. Lukas Meyer was a dozen miles away on the Buffalo River, seemingly indifferent to what was taking place at Dundee, while General Kock was actually engaged in fighting 4,000 of the Ladysmith garrison at Elandslaagte with his Johannesburg commando. In a word, 8,000 Boers, within a radius of thirty miles, with a beaten army of 6,000 in between, had no plan, no

intercommunication in concerted effort to prevent Yule from carrying his defeated and dispirited troops to the shelter of Ladysmith.

It was the first great opportunity which the war had offered to Joubert for the exercise of his generalship in the field, and he was found wofully wanting in the qualities which the occasion demanded. The result of the fight on Friday, which ended at two in the afternoon, must have been known to the Commandant-General that night. The discovery of Impati Hill by Erasmus, and the consequent break-up of the British camp at Dundee on Saturday, could not be concealed from him, even were it attempted, as he was immediately in the rear of Erasmus' column. He was in touch with Lukas Meyer's men, east of his own position, with no enemy in between, and yet not a single move was ordered by him, either to direct a continued and crushing attack on Yule, or to prevent this all but encircled officer from escaping by the Helpmakaar road to Ladysmith—the only way left for him to retreat by. Nothing, in fact, was done that should have been the obvious and imperative work of the moment in face of the enemy's desperate difficulties, and he was, therefore, allowed to steal away on Sunday night from under Erasmus' guns, practically unmolested.

General Yule's escape through the Biggarsberg passes was one of the most notable performances of the war, and must rank high in the military achievements of the British in the campaign. It was the one and only way in which to save his force from capture. The success of the desperate enterprise of carrying a straggling beaten force of 5,000 men and three batteries of artillery through tortuous gorges and across a range of mountains in a continuous march of three days and nights of wet and frightful weather, where 1,000 Boers could have successfully barred the way, was due, next to his own sagacity and resource, to the lack of cohesive purpose and want of intelligent military direction in his opponent's plans.

Erasmus took possession of Dundee on Monday, October 23. The town was not much injured by Boer shells, owing to the English camp having been placed a mile away towards Glencoe, and to the activity of the Boer guns, both from Talana and Impati, these being directed towards the changed positions of the English artillery. Enormous military stores were found, and among them huge quantities of Mark IV. ammunition—the ammunition which it was declared, in Parliament, in July and October, was not to be used by British soldiers in the event of war breaking out in South Africa!

Two incidents connected with the capture of Dundee were related to me while standing, a few months subsequently, in the little

graveyard in the town where General Penn Symons sleeps oblivious of further battles and bloodshed.

A Dublin Fusilier and a young burgher were lying side by side in one of the extemporized hospitals, awaiting the arrival of the doctors to dress their wounds. Said the Boer:

"Tell me, my friend, do you know why you have been sent out to fight against the people of the Transvaal?"

Dublin Fusilier—"Well, I'll be hanged if I do!"

Boer—"Then I will tell you. It is because Mr. Chamberlain wanted our Government to give the franchise to the Englishmen on the Rand after five years' residence in the country, instead of seven, as President Kruger proposed."

Dublin Fusilier—"Do you tell me so! Why, we have been fighting for a full franchise in Ireland for 700 years, and we haven't got it yet!"

A nephew of General Joubert's who had reached Dundee with the advanced portion of Erasmus' force entered a shed from whence sounds of pain came from a party of wounded British. On pushing open a door which gave admission to the place, he overheard one of the wounded say in tones of fear, "May God have mercy on us, here they come! They will cut our throats!" "Oh, no, we won't," instantly responded Mr. Joubert. "We are Christians like yourselves, and you will be treated just as kindly as our own wounded!"

"Good Lord, Mike," exclaimed the agreeably astonished Fusilier, turning to his companion, "the Boers speak better English than we do in Dublin."

In further conversation with the wounded Tommies, Mr. Joubert found that their minds had been crammed with the usual English lies about the character of the Boers. They were believed to be a compound of uneducated Dutchmen and of savage Kaffir; a treacherous, inhuman foeman, dead to all the better feelings of civilized soldiers; unkempt, cruel, and rapacious. Great and agreeable, therefore, was the astonishment of the British prisoners and wounded at this first encounter with the maligned Boer. They found him the very reverse of the picture which the Rhodesian slanderers in the Cape and London press had drawn of the people whose country was to be ruthlessly despoiled by Imperial forces.

Chapter XIII

BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE

DETAILS OF THE BATTLE—WEAKNESS OF GENERAL KOCK'S POSITION—EIGHT HUNDRED AGAINST FOUR THOUSAND—KOCK RECEIVES FATAL WOUND—"THE PIG-STICKING" BOASTS OF THE BRITISH—CONFESSIONS OF BRUTALITY—CHARGES AGAINST THE ENEMY—BOER *vs.* BRITISH TREATMENT OF THEIR FOES—SKETCH OF GENERAL KOCK.

GENERAL JAN KOCK and his Johannesburg commando, which comprised a Krugersdorp contingent, a Hollander corps, and a German brigade, in all about 800 strong, entered Natal through Botha's Pass at midnight on the 12th of October. The particular movement to be carried out by Kock and his column was not revealed in any order or instructions from Joubert. These 800 men were considered a crack force, and numbered some of the most daring spirits on the Boer side in the Rand and district. Many of the leading burghers, men like Dr. Hermanus Coster, the State Prosecutor; Goldman, of the Railway Commission; De Wit Hamer, the Town Clerk of Pretoria; Major Hall, an Englishman; Landrost Bodenstein, and several other equally prominent citizens, were also volunteers under Kock. The Hollander Corps, numbering 150 Dutch Uitlanders under Commandant Jan Lombard, member of the Second Raad, was a fighting body from which much was expected, while the German Uitlander Corps under Colonel Schiel, 100 strong, included many Rand miners who had been trained to arms in the German army. Ben Viljoen, member of the Second Raad for the Rand, was in command of the Johannesburg contingent, which made up the bulk of Kock's force, and the fire-eating reputation of the handsome Ben was looked to in the golden city as a pledge of brave deeds to be done when the enemy was encountered. The column was accompanied by 150 Free Staters, and its entire artillery equipment consisted of two Maxim-Nordenfelts.

On reaching Ingogo, General Kock wired to Joubert for reenforcements, owing to information he had received that the English were in strength at Newcastle. Kock was ordered not to engage the enemy until the Pretoria column, under Erasmus, then on its

way towards Newcastle, should come up. It was found, however, that the English had fallen back on Dannhauser, and subsequently on Glencoe, whereupon Kock, pressed by the impatient spirits in his command, moved ahead in the path of the retiring enemy. He formed his laager near Sunday's River, upon the southern slopes of the Biggarsberg, and sent forward two patrols of fifty men each —one under Field Cornet Potgieter, of Schiel's command, and the other under Field Cornet Pienaar, of Viljoen's Rand Brigade—with strict injunctions to return to the laager, and to engage in no encounter. Potgieter captured a provision train and 800 cattle at Washbank on the 19th, and, emboldened by this success, he disregarded orders, and went further south in the direction of Ladysmith. He was joined by Pienaar on the 20th, near Elandslaagte railway station, twelve miles from the British camp, in the evening. While deliberating what to do next, a train was observed steaming towards them from Ladysmith, and the patrols resolved upon its capture. It turned out to be a provision train bound for Dundee, and carrying supplies and a band for Penn Symons' camp. The patrols took possession of the railway station, and on the train arriving it was surrounded, and captured with very little show of force. The station-master and the telegrapher were made prisoners; the latter being locked in a room in the railway station, but it was the room containing the telegraph instrument!

The men of the patrols were soon busy ransacking the train, which they found well stocked with brandy, wine, and whisky, and what happened, in consequence, was the cause of the serious reverse which followed on the morrow. A large number of the patrols indulged in the dangerous booty, not wisely but too liberally, the result being that many became, according to report, intoxicated. While this was going on, the imprisoned telegraph clerk used his instrument with effect. He had wired to Ladysmith an account of what was occurring at Elandslaagte.

Colonel Schiel, who now arrived on the scene with part of his men, realized the seriousness of the situation, and was in the act of withdrawing Potgieter and his patrol from the station when two armored trains, carrying a large force of British and some guns, steamed from the direction of Ladysmith, and commenced to shell the station. After exchanging fire with the enemy, Schiel retired the patrols to a position a mile eastward from the station, and remained there during the night. A despatch was sent at once to General Kock and Commandant Viljoen, informing them of the situation. Kock was always a better fighter than a cool general, and, instead of ordering Schiel to fall back upon the main laager and refuse battle within two hours' march of 5,000 or 6,000

British, he gave instant orders to his men to saddle and go forward immediately to the support of the imprudent patrols. The motive was chivalrous, but the act was most unwise, and the result disastrous.

On reaching Elandslaagte on Saturday morning, General Kock found that Schiel had taken up the best position left for the Boers to occupy. This was a ridge gradually rising from the level veldt, and affording cover against the eight guns which General French had already brought into action. General Kock made a hasty disposition of his men, in conjunction with Schiel's position on the elevated, stony ridge, and immediately opened fire with his Maxim-Nordenfelts upon the enemy, who occupied a lower ridge some 4,000 yards southward, across an intervening stretch of rough ground. Kock's two guns were effectively handled, and soon compelled the British artillery to retire back in the direction of Modderspruit railway station. This easy repulse of the attacking force greatly elated the Johannesburg men. They were convinced that the battle was over, and that the English had retreated on Ladysmith, refusing to fight.

This over-sanguine view was not shared by either the general or Schiel, who rightly conjectured that the British officer had only been engaged in a reconnaissance, and had fallen back in order to wait the arrival of more guns and men. The obvious duty, however, was for Kock and Viljoen to have fallen back also, after having rescued Schiel and Potgieter from their dangerous situation. Ladysmith was only a dozen miles away, and both road and railway from that town would enable General White to rush forward an overwhelming force in a few hours' time. All this sane consideration was, however, lost upon the Rand fire-eaters. They could wipe out any number of English, and they were not going to run away, after having "chased" the enemy back to his camp, etc. It was therefore unwisely determined to remain in the position which the commando had taken up on its arrival, and to await the renewal of the fight.

It is of vital importance, in estimating the value of the victory gained by General French in this battle, to understand rightly the nature of the ground on which it was fought. All the English reports of the fight greatly exaggerate the natural strength of Kock's position; some war correspondents giving a pen-picture of a great hill, with steep and almost inaccessible sides, from the top of which batteries of Boer artillery were represented as shelling the dauntless, charging Tommies. The London illustrated papers presented the public with pictures of this imaginary veldt Gibraltar, as being stormed in face of numerous guns belching forth their

GENERAL KOCK AND HIS COMMANDO WHICH FOUGHT AT ELANDSLAAGTE, OCTOBER 20, 1899

death-dealing shells in vain efforts to stem the resistless tide of rushing, British valor.

General Kock had only two Maxim-Nordenfelts in this battle, and no other guns of any class or description.

Fortunately a real photograph of the battle-field of Elandslaagte is in existence, and the sun, as an unerring witness, can be placed in opposition to the artists in exaggeration, who have magnified the height and strength of the ridge on which the desperate battle was fought, so as to make greater the victory won by the English, and to lessen the credit due to the Boers for their splendid and unequal combat.

The ridge represented in the picture on page 137 rises from a green valley, about a mile and a half east of Elandslaagte railway station, with the open space in which the figure stands sloping down to the level ground towards Ladysmith. The man in the picture is looking in the direction from which the English advanced, and the ridge behind him is that on which the Boers made their chief stand against French's forces. Back of the ridge, at a distance of half a mile, there is a lower ridge, or small kopje, and the brief but heroic fight of Kock's body-guard when the day was lost was made near this place.

To the right of the scene in the picture the ridge continues, and slopes down in rough, stony ground to the level veldt, which extends for four or five miles southward, where another stony ridge crops up again from the plain. It was behind this rising ground that French massed his men and guns preparatory to the final advance upon the Boer position in the afternoon.

There was no military judgment exercised by Kock in the selection of this position for so small a force. Level ground lay to the right and left, while there was no higher or strong natural elevation immediately in the rear to which men and guns could retire for another stand in case the enemy's force should carry out a successful turning movement. There was likewise some open country at right angles to the ridge, across which the Boers would have to retreat in the event of failing to hold their ground, and where the enemy's cavalry would have the freest scope for a flanking attack. All these weak points in Kock's position were to be defended by 800 or 900 men and two guns, against a combined infantry and cavalry force of 4,000 troops with fifteen field pieces.

The falling back of French's cavalry and artillery in the morning enabled Kock to make a hasty preparation for the next encounter. His little force was spread out more or less over three positions; his center resting on the ridge represented in the picture, and comprising Ben Viljoen's Rand commando and the Krugers-

dorp men; his left covered the southern part of the ridge, where the Hollander corps and Schiel's Germans extended down to where the rising ground merged into the veldt; while the right was made up of Free Staters and others, who covered the camp, baggage, and ambulance wagons, and took no active part in the fight. These divisions, however, only held good until the main English attack was delivered. The various corps and bodies then got mixed up, and fought as a disorganized unit to the finish. The two guns were placed first in the center, near the elevation in the picture of the field, where there was a strong natural rock protection for their safety, but they were moved to other positions during the latter part of the engagement.

Noon arrived, and there was still no sign of a returning enemy on the horizon. Two scouting parties of a hundred men each were sent forward under Field Cornets Potgieter and Pienaar to the ridge southwards across the plain, to feel for the foe. Shots were soon after heard, and Schiel, with most of his Germans, galloped across the veldt to the aid of Potgieter and his men. They found the enemy advancing in great force from Modderspruit, and Potgieter's fiery imprudence insisted upon a stand being made against the tide of foes sweeping down upon them. Schiel, unwilling to abandon the reckless Boer officer, took up position, and the enemy were fired upon by 300 men from the cover of the ridge.

The little force fell back at once upon their base, followed across the veldt by shells from the British guns. Schiel took his Germans one way, and Potgieter and Pienaar with their men made for the ridge held by Lombard and the Hollanders, at the extreme left of Kock's main position. The Germans wandered round by the railway to the north, and lost their way; finding it again only as darkness was coming on, and when the battle was virtually over, to be fired upon by the British, and by the Free Staters also in mistake, as Schiel and his followers cut into the battle-field in the midst of the Boer retreat.

General French's plan of attack was formed for him by the position of his adversary, isolated on a ridge, surrounded by level ground, and offering the freest play for a combined force of artillery, infantry, and cavalry.

His plan was to send a strong contingent of his best troops straight against Kock's left, composed mainly of the Hollanders, which was weakest in men and natural strength, and by cooperating artillery and rifle fire force those who held this end of the ridge back upon Kock's center, which could then be assaulted from the higher ground thus gained. French's guns with mounted protection were to form a flanking support for this attack, after shelling

the Boer left from their position, while Lancers, Dragoons, and Natal cavalry were to move by the road from Ladysmith, parallel with the railway, on the left of the guns, to bar the retreat of the Boers after the delivery of the British assault on the center, and to deal the calculated crushing blow.

The English renewed the fight at about three o'clock with an artillery attack upon Kock's entire lines. The Boer guns replied in most accurate aim, and maintained the unequal contest for over an hour, when it became evident that French's batteries were searching every portion of the ridge with their shells. Kock's two

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guns were soon temporarily silenced, and immediately the enemy moved against the portion of the ridge held by the Hollanders. A force of mounted British advanced to the left of where Lombard clung to the rocks, as if bent upon a turning movement. The advance was a screen for a large force of infantry which French had sent to attack Lombard's right, which was being shelled by the English cannon, now firing within a range of 3,000 yards. Lombard's Hollanders clamored for a counter attack, which was unwisely ordered, and the Dutchmen gallantly sprang from their cover out into the plain, kneeling and aiming as they pressed forward to meet the enemy. They shot back with great intrepidity the mounted troops, who retired, but their Mausers failed effectively to find the Tommies who were moving on their right, as these were cautiously taking cover behind stones and ant-hills while

creeping forward for the final spring upon the ridge. The enemy's guns were now trained upon the Hollanders, who were thus compelled to fall back, pursued by Lancers, and losing many of their number. The Boer Nordenfelts here spoke again from a new position, and checked the further advance of this attack upon Lombard, enabling the Hollanders to retire from the extreme edge of the ridge, which could no longer be defended against the converging fire of both artillery and infantry upon it.

It was not, however, until near seven o'clock that French's force succeeded in fighting its way as far as Kock's left, so gallantly and so stubbornly had that part of the ridge been defended by the Krugersdorp men and the Hollanders.

Once that end of the ridge was taken, however, the other end became untenable. The entire commando now crowded upon the part of the ridge shown in the picture, while the British were mounting on to the corresponding bend of the horseshoe-shaped field. The fighting from this became hot and furious, as the combatants were nearing each other. The day, too, was fading into darkness, and the rain came down in torrents upon the drenched battle-field. It was realized about this hour from the center of the ridge that French's cavalry were advancing on the right to cut off retreat, while other mounted forces were working round to the east, and something akin to a panic set in among the Johannesburg Uitlanders. They broke away for their horses in the rear, seeing that with their two guns silenced, and the enemy on both the right and left of their position with his guns unopposed, it was humanly impossible for Kock to hold on to the center of the menaced ridge except to be exterminated. The Krugersdorp men, with about fifty Hollanders and other Uitlanders, held on to the position round the two guns with grim resolve; firing steadily amidst the hail of shells and bullets which swept in upon them from all sides. Retreat was almost cut off by the encircling British, whose artillery was now within a range of 1,500 yards. The first of the enemy to top the ridge nearest the guns were some Gordon Highlanders, who sprang over the boulders, against which the bullets of the Boers whistled their messages of menace and death. The kilted Tommies had only time to shout "Majuba avenged!" when they were instantly shot down by Kock and his bodyguard. The deadly fire which these poured across the field from their cover arrested for a time the final advance of the English over the level ground shown in the picture of the battle-field. During this pause Kock and Viljoen attempted to rally more of their men behind the ridge, near the camp, in a final effort to rescue the guns. The ridge, however, was by this time found to be almost surrounded

by the enemy's troops, infantry and mounted, and the attempt had to be abandoned. Two bodies of the British were rushing for the abandoned Nordenfelts, in the belief that the fight was all but over, when there occurred the most striking act of heroism which the day had witnessed, and which afterwards extorted praise even from the enemy's officers. Seven of the fifty men who still remained fighting round General Kock, seeing the rush being made for the guns by the enemy, left their position and walked out deliberately, opening as they went, to fire on the advancing troopers. They stood in line, coolly aiming and bringing down riders at each volley; the men falling by return fire, until only one of the seven was left. He fell wounded, but not before he had spiked the two guns. His name was Smit, and he was the only one of the seven Krugersdorpers who was not killed in this heroic display of life-giving courage. These devoted men thus nobly gave their lives in a last attempt to save the guns, and to allow their general and his guard to escape.

The final stand of General Kock on the field, which his splendid bravery could not save from the faults of his generalship, was well and graphically described in a letter written shortly after the battle by the burgher-son of an Englishman, who fought by his general's side until the last moment. The letter relating what had occurred has the natural frankness and some of the boasting of a boy, and was addressed to his mother at Johannesburg. The writer's name is Vyvian Coghill, and his age was 19. He was one of Ben Viljoen's Rand commando.

His story is this:

"We kept firing till the infantry came on and looked like surrounding us; then some fled. In the flight the Germans suffered heaviest. Some fifty of us, however, stuck to our posts with the officers. Then the fire from the Maxims and the cannon became so hot that we retreated to the back of the kop, where Commandant Viljoen and General Kock rallied our men, and we came forward again. Some of the others took the nearest horses and cleared off; but twelve of us stuck to the general and returned to the guns, while the balance went with Commandant Viljoen to the other side of the kop. When the English were about 500 yards away we mowed them down like sheep. It was terrible! I never felt a little bit of fear. I prayed to God, and fired like a soldier, taking aim every time. By this time we were only fifty men altogether left on the kop, and the English soldiers were climbing up and surrounding the kop. Some of the Highlanders were running after our men, when eight of us, including General Kock, opened fire on them at 50 yards, and not one escaped. Just then General Kock was shot down just at my side, and three others within five

yards of me. I stood up and said 'God help me,' and van Niekerk (detective) got a shot in his wrist. As his hand dropped he took his gun to the left, threw it over his arm, and continued firing as if nothing had happened. General Kock lay half-dying at our feet, and we could not help him. Then the infantry came round the other side of the kop, and there was only a space of 200 yards to go through to get out, and only about five men standing on the kop, with bullets and shells flying round. None of us would put up the white flag, and we made a break for safety. The English turned a Maxim on us, and I never ran in all my life like I did then. When I got down my horse was gone, but I found another, and after just escaping a charge from the Lancers, got clean away."

Two among the many brave men who fell on the Boer side in the fight were Englishmen—Major Hall, and Mr. Richard Impey, of Johannesburg; both of whom took part in Lombard's charge across the veldt early in the engagement, and were shot dead in defending the freedom of their adopted country against the aggression of their native land. Many desperate hand-to-hand encounters took place in the final advance of the English over the open space to where it was thought the Boer guns would be found. The Germans came upon the field when the fight was nearly over, having lost themselves in the retreat from the scouting encounter early in the afternoon, and having suffered heavily in collisions with the Dragoons. Colonel Schiel was wounded and taken prisoner. Many Germans and Boers whose horses had been taken or killed in the capture of Kock's camp shot Lancers from their horses and escaped on their enemies' mounts. The struggle continued until darkness came on, the Lancers and Dragoons pursuing the retreating Boer commando, which had left over one-third of its number on and around the ridge where the unequal fight had been waged.

A complete list of the Boer killed and wounded was published by Dr. Visser in the Johannesburg press of the 6th of November. The list gives the name, age, home address, nature of wound, and name of commando in which the dead and wounded had served. The publication of this list disposes of the Jingo fiction as to "the hundreds" of Boers who were declared to have been killed and wounded at that battle, but not accounted for. Dr. Visser was on the field while the engagement lasted, in charge of the Johannesburg ambulance.

The killing of wounded Boers by Lancers and others at this fight excited a widespread feeling of indignation throughout the civilized world. The American and Continental press were especially outspoken in condemnation of the brutality which disgraced the Brit-

ish soldiers in their treatment of beaten and wounded foes, after the fortunes of the fight had fallen to the side of the stronger combatant. On the very same day when an English general and two or three hundred wounded at Dundee had fallen into Boer hands, and were humanely treated, on their own acknowledgment, the English victors at Elandslaagte were boasting of their "pig-sticking," and of the number of Boers to whom they had denied quarter.

Some of the worst reports penned by these brutal-minded Tommies were possibly exaggerated in the savagery of their boasting. The writers described themselves in the language of bravos as bigger ruffians in print than they probably were in act. Still, their shameless self-laudation for the number of Boers they had killed when asking for mercy or quarter found a ready publication in all the English papers, with few, if any, editorial protests against the inhumanity which was made the subject of self-praise by the writers. One searches in vain through any record of Boer fighting to find any moral or soldierly parallel to this disgusting spirit of British civilized savagery.

A British officer was quoted in the "Times" (15th of November, 1899) as saying:

"After the enemy were driven out one of our squadrons pursued and got right in among them in the twilight, and most excellent pig-sticking ensued for about ten minutes, the bag being about sixty. One of our men stuck his lance through two, killing them both at one thrust. Had it not been getting dark we should have killed many more."

In a score of other versions of the same performances, published in other papers, proof is piled upon proof that deeds were done at this fight by English soldiers which would do more credit to the banner of the Sultan of Turkey than to that of a professed Christian nation.

A Lancer writing home had his letter published by his admiring relative in the Brighton "Argus." This champion of Christian England said: "We got a charge at them; they asked for mercy, but we were told not to give them any, and I assure you they got none. We went along sticking our lances through them—it was a terrible thing, but you have to do it in a case like this." Boers do not stand in a row to be stuck after a battle; neither do their horses wait patiently on the field for the approach of a galloping trooper. Clearly what the writer of this letter meant to convey was that he and his companions "went along sticking our lances" in men who lay wounded, or otherwise helpless, on the veldt. This view is supported by another warrior of equal chivalry, who relates:

"We charged them, and they went on their knees begging of us to shoot them rather than stab them with our lances, but in vain. The time had come for us to do our work, and we did it."

Another hero named Williams is his own historian of how he perpetrated the following deliberate murder: "I got hold of one Boer"—he had taken an enemy prisoner—"he did not know what I intended doing, so I made motions for him to run for his life. So he went, and I galloped after him with the sergeant's sword, and cut his head right off his body!"

A Lancer is reported as having said to the war correspondent of the "Daily Chronicle": "We just gave them a good dig as they

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lay. Next day most of the lances were bloody." Here, clearly, it was a boast of stabbing wounded foemen who were lying helpless on the ground.

There were British soldiers of a more practical turn of mind than the boastful Lancers at Elandslaagte, and equally creditable to the cause for which the war was provoked. They, too, were willing narrators of their own prowess on what used to be known as "the field of honor"; and their letters were also published in the model press of England as indicating what brave men were doing for the flag at the front. The "Liverpool Daily Post" found space for the following epistle from some local Bayard of the Jingo cult of English soldier chivalry:

"Many of our soldiers are quite rich with the loot that has fallen to them. The infantry regiments profited to the largest

extent. One Tommy secured a pocket-book containing £270 in Transvaal money. Our boys are parading about now with gold watches, chains, and other trinkets."

All this may be revolting, infamous, cowardly. But if the authors of a war which was purposely provoked for the grabbing of the richest gold-reefs in the world are to be considered as standing high in English religious, social, and political esteem, despite the results of the disastrous conflict which their greed has caused, how could an English Tommy Atkins be expected to see either shame or dishonor in picking the pocket of a wounded Boer, or in lifting a watch from a dead foeman?

This inhumanity was not shown for the first time in the war on the field of Elandslaagte by the British. The example was given in the very first encounter with the Boers at Talana, and the spirit which prompted such unsoldierly conduct was the result of the calumnies circulated in the Rhodesian and Jingo press against the people of the Transvaal before war was declared. This malignant feeling was even extended to doctors and others who were attached to the Boer commandoes. The following specific and detailed instances of violations of the Red Cross at Dundee were published in the Boer press at the time, and amply justified the protest which General Joubert addressed to the European Powers against such violations of the rules of civilized warfare by English troops:

"Dr. Adolf Vlaskamp, of Utrecht, states that in the Dundee battle, of the 20th of October, the Hussars attacked the horse ridden by Dr. van der Merwe (of Krugersdorp) in spite of the fact that its rider bore the insignia of the Red Cross. Not content with killing the doctor's horse, an attack was made upon its rider, but a British officer galloped up and ordered the troopers to cease dishonoring the Red Cross emblem.

"In the same way Dr. Watt, District Surgeon of Wakkerstroom, was taken prisoner, despite the fact that he explained his capacity and asked the protection of the Red Cross. Dr. Watt was compelled to ride round the camp from noon till sundown, and was only liberated on the Saturday following the battle.

"Justus Dirks, Revenue Officer at Volksrust, and Bantjes, Collector of Taxes at Wakkerstroom, were made prisoners by the English on that fateful Friday, while in the act of carrying the burgher wounded to the Red Cross ambulance. Dirks and Bantjes both bore flags supplied to them by the field doctors.

"'Seventeen of our men,' said the doctor, concluding an interview with a representative, 'were tied to a wagon and marched, French fashion. They were told by the Britishers that if they resisted they would be shot; and, as a matter of fact, two men who were more

troublesome than the rest were actually wounded. They were afterwards liberated when we took Dundee.' "

These instances of how the British acted towards Boer doctors and prisoners at Dundee show that the more reprehensible conduct of the Lancers and others at Elandslaagte was not accidental to the passions of that encounter; but is a proof that some of the English soldiers and officers were capable of a barbarity towards their foes which Kaffirs might hesitate to commit.

The treatment accorded to General Kock was especially revolting, he having been the Boer officer in command at Elandslaagte, and a man of striking presence whose identity could not be ignored, except by men unworthy to be his foes. The following facts, sworn to by his nephew after the general's death, gave the Africander nation the true moral measure of that superior civilization which it was England's mission to teach to the benighted Boer, through the medium of its truest missionary, Mr. Thomas Atkins:

"I, the undersigned, Philip Rudolph Kock, responsible clerk at the Pass Office, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Gold Fields, S. A. R., declare under oath and say :

"Early the same morning I again went with Dr. Visser to the battle-field. The first of the wounded I happened on was General Kock; he lay in a small tent, entirely naked. He told me that an English soldier had come to him and robbed him of all the money that was in his trousers pocket, of his watch, and of all his clothes, except one coat. He also informed me that this person stated that he belonged to the Indian troops. He (the General) was covered by a thin blanket, and lay on a small wet mattress.

. . . . . .

"Not alone were General Kock and the persons mentioned above robbed of their clothes, watches, and money, but also others. On the battle-field I saw the remains of Assistant Commandant Bodenstein (Landrost of Krugersdorp). He had received a bullet in his left breast, which pierced his heart. He had been robbed of his telescope, his rings had been taken from his fingers, and all his money was gone.

"I also saw the remains of Piet Blignaut, sen. His boots, watch, money, and snuff-box were gone.

"From the body of Willie Pretorius (Revenue Collector at Johannesburg) were taken all his money, and his ring from off his finger.

"From Servaas De Wet, who was only wounded in the left leg, a ring and his money were taken. I hear that he has now been exchanged, and he will be able to testify to the same.

"J. A. Lepeltakkeeft was wounded by a Lancer; he threw his gun down, and, holding up his hand, surrendered himself as

prisoner. He next gave up his revolver and bandolier. He was ordered to march 'voorwaarts,' and took a turn to the left. He did not do this quickly enough in the opinion of the English officer, and was then shot from behind by the officer with a revolver. The bullet entered the shoulders and the lungs, where it remained. I was subsequently called into the hospital to translate J. A. Lepeltakkeeft's narrative to an English officer, and this, in short, was the story he told. That same night he died. The reply of the English officer when the complaint was made was—'It is hard lines on the poor fellow, but I will report the matter.'"

Dr. Hermanus Coster, the Transvaal State Prosecutor, was likewise dishonored and robbed of his money and watch while lying where he had nobly died fighting for the freedom of his adopted country.

One short week after these bandit proceedings of British soldiers the following letter was addressed to the State Secretary at Pretoria, by Major Donegal, R.A.M.C:

"October 28th, Field Hospital, Glencoe.

"Sir—I wish to convey to you the thanks of all British officers and men of my hospital for the extreme kindness shown to them by officers and men of the Boer forces. Would you notify to the British authorities the death of Sir William Penn Symons, on the 23rd, and also state that all wounded officers and men are doing splendidly, and that none of the officers are likely to die?

"Will you kindly communicate the above to the British authorities?"

On the very same day that this letter was written the following reply (with the many letters of the alphabet duly attached) was forwarded in answer to a request sent in the name of General Kock by his brother and son (both wounded and prisoners) that the wounded general might be taken to his home to be nursed by his family:

"From Lieut.-General Sir George White, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., commanding the British Forces in Natal.

"To General J. H. M. Kock,
"Ladysmith.

"Head Quarters, Ladysmith,
"27th October, 1899.

"Sir—I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of this date, and regret very much that I cannot consent that you or your staff should leave for Pretoria to-morrow, as the retention of a general officer of your rank and distinction as a prisoner of war is of considerable value to the State I represent.

"Personally I regret very much not being able to meet your wishes in this matter.—I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"GEORGE S. WHITE,
"Lieutenant-General,
"Commanding the British Forces in Natal."

General Kock died in Ladysmith a few days later.

Ten days after Elandslaagte the battle of Modderspruit was fought and won by Joubert, and the following is the testimony willingly borne by no admirer of the Boer race or cause, the late Mr. G. W. Steevens, of the London "Daily Mail," to the chivalry and humanity of the Transvaal burghers, as shown to the British troops who had fallen as wounded and prisoners, into their hands:

"They gave the whole (unwounded) men the water out of their own bottles; they gave the wounded the blankets off their own saddles, and slept themselves on the naked veldt. They were short of transport, and they were mostly armed with Martinis; yet they gave captured mules for the hospital panniers, and captured Lee-Metfords for splints. A man was rubbing a hot sore on his head with half a crown; nobody offered to take it from him. Some of them asked soldiers for their embroidered waist-belts as mementos of the day. 'It's got my money in it,' replied Tommy—a little surly, no wonder—and the captor said no more."—("From Cape Town to Ladysmith," G. W. Steevens, pp. 79, 80.)

The Boer casualties numbered over one-third of General Kock's commando; 45 killed, 110 wounded, and 185 taken prisoner. The British losses were reported to be 4 officers and 31 men killed, 31 officers and 175 men wounded, with 10 missing. The following names among the list of prisoners taken by General French show that many Uitlanders of English, Scotch, and Irish extraction deemed themselves to be so "oppressed" under the Kruger régime as to take up arms and risk their lives in its defense against Mr. Chamberlain's emancipating English army:

W. Smith, J. H. M'Kenzie, A. K. Hutchinson, W. Ashbrook, J. Quirk, H. Andrew, C. J. Smith, W. H. Dixon, N. D. Thompson, Z. Seymour, H. Martin, A. Brown, John Brown, M. Smith, G. T. Robertson, E. Devine, J. T. Young, G. W. Marsh, E. W. Holder, J. T. Webb, G. A. Jones, J. G. Smith, — Tindall, F. Dorey.

GENERAL KOCK

Johannes Hermanus Michael Kock was one of the most popular citizens of the Transvaal Republic. He was born of a fighting

family, and took part at the age of 12 in the battle of Boomplaats in 1848. He figured prominently with his two brothers in the wars against both natives and British which occurred during his long career. He was 62 years of age when he received his death wound; or, rather, when he was stripped of his clothing and robbed of his money, and left for fourteen hours wounded and unaided, by his chivalrous captors on the unsheltered veldt. He succumbed to the joint effects of exposure and wounds. The imposing funeral procession which followed his coffin in Pretoria testified to his immense popularity, and to the sense of the public loss which his death created in the popular mind.

He was a man of noble presence, tall, handsome, and soldier-like, and was greatly esteemed in private as in laager life by all who knew him.

He filled the post of Minute Keeper to the Executive Government of the Transvaal, and enjoyed the confidence of President Kruger as no other burgher did, he being invariably the President's companion in the official and other visits paid by Mr. Kruger to the various districts of the country. No man in the Transvaal was a nobler type of burgher citizen in his record of patriotic service, his unblemished character, personal dignity, and sterling manly qualities. A son and two brothers fought by his side, and were wounded on the same field of battle.

Chapter XIV

BATTLE OF MODDERSPRUIT

ENGAGEMENT AT REITFONTEIN—JOUBERT'S AND WHITE'S ARMIES—ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE AND DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH—JOUBERT'S REFUSAL "TO PURSUE A FLEEING CHRISTIAN FOE"—COLONEL BLAKE'S BRIGADE—NICHOLSON'S NEK—GENERAL DE WET'S FIRST BRILLIANT EXPLOIT—BRITISH AND BOER CASUALTIES—THE ALLEGED TREACHERY OF BRITISH GUIDES—CHARACTER SKETCHES OF GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA AND CHRISTIAN DE WET.

REITFONTEIN

ON the Tuesday (October 24) following the battle at Elandslaagte, an engagement, mainly confined to a fight with guns, took place between General White's forces and some Free Staters, about five miles southwest of the scene of Saturday's encounter. The English general had the service of three batteries of artillery, and of some 3,000 mounted troops and infantry. The Free Staters consisted of half the commandoes which General Prinsloo had led across the Drakensberg by Van Reenan's Pass after the declaration of war; 1,500 men, with two Krupp guns and a Maxim-Nordenfelt.

A railway connecting Natal with the Orange Free State runs from Ladysmith northwest to the alpine range of mountains dividing the two countries, and enters the Free State through the famous pass. This vulnerable point in the northeastern frontier of the Free State was guarded since the 1st of October by the burghers belonging to the districts of the Republic from Winburg to Heilbron, and from Harrismith to Kroonstad.

On the 19th of October the greater portion of this force swept down Van Reenan's Pass and took possession, after a slight encounter between outposts, of Besters railway station; a point on the railway line from Ladysmith to the Free State about as far from the town now famous in the annals of the war as Elandslaagte is from the same town, on the line north to Dundee and Laing's Nek.

The two lines travel northwest and northeast respectively from Ladysmith, branching out somewhat in the form of the letter V for a distance of about a dozen miles, where Elandslaagte is reached

on the right hand branch of the letter, and Besters Station on the left hand branch. The distance across from west to east, or point to point, would be some twelve or fifteen miles, and within this V-shaped district Nicholson's Nek may be said to occupy the center, with Reitfontein and Pepworth to the right, near the line going from Ladysmith to Elandslaagte, and Modderspruit a little to the right still of that line, and running parallel with it.

A patrol of fifty burghers under Field Cornet Pretorius preceded the main force of Prinsloo's commandoes on the 19th, and engaged a body of eighty men of the Natal Carbineers west of Besters. The Colonials were under the command of Lieutenant Galway and fought well, but they were shot back by the Free Staters, who took possession of the station. The British officer and a dozen of his men were wounded in the skirmish, and were taken prisoners by Pretorius.

Prinsloo remained at Besters with the main portion of his force from the 19th to the 24th. He was within fifteen miles of the scene of the desperate fight of Saturday, the 21st, between General Kock's Johannesburgers and French's army, but rendered no help of any kind. This failure to cooperate in an operation outside of the immediate plans of a commando, even though the fight may be near at hand, as in this instance, is more or less incidental to the Boer military system. It is due to the tendency, in the military organization of the Republics, to predominance of local over national or central authority, and has been one of the chief sources of weakness in the Federal armies. It is true, Kock brought on the fight of Saturday through his imprudence, and that no intimation of his plans was given to Prinsloo. But this officer could not be ignorant of what was taking place, a dozen miles away, during the whole of the 21st, two hours' ride eastward of his position, and yet neither a man nor a gun was moved by him in the direction of the fighting. This, however, was by no means the most serious instance of Prinsloo's masterly inactivity in the war.

On Sunday, the 22nd, Commandant Andries Cronje, of Winburg with some 1,500 men moved across in the direction of Elandslaagte to the north of Nicholson's Kop, and took up a position on some hills at Hobbs' Land Farm extending eastwards towards Reitfontein. Prinsloo remained behind at Besters. The officers who accompanied Cronje were Commandants Christian De Wet, Nel, and Theunissen, of the Heilbron and Kroonstad commandoes. The objective of the Free Staters was to intercept the Dundee garrison, which began its retreat under General Yule on Saturday night, and toiled through the Biggarsberg passes on Sunday and Monday, on its way to the shelter of the British base at Ladysmith.

General White moved out from Ladysmith with the guns and men at his disposal on Tuesday morning to meet Yule's retreating columns. On reaching a point west of the railway line near Reitfontein the British cavalry were fired upon and driven back by Andries Cronje's Winburgers, who held a position about a mile eastward of Nicholson's Kop. North of this position, on a higher hill, Commandant Nel, with two Krupp seven-pounders, was posted, while Commandant De Wet, with the Kroonstad and other burghers, held a hill on the left of the Free State lines nearer to Reitfontein. The main English column soon came up with its guns, and an artillery duel between the enemy's batteries and Nel's Krupps continued for several hours. The Boer guns were driven from their first to a second and more secure position by the fire of White's batteries, but beyond this temporary check no injury was done. Two attempts were subsequently made by White to turn the Boer positions, and both ended disastrously. The Gloucester Regiment endeavored to work round to the left hill occupied by De Wet's contingent, and were met by such a fusillade that over fifty of the British fell before the Boer fire. The remainder bolted down the hill. A body of Natal Volunteers tried a similar movement against the Winburgers near Nicholson's Nek. They drove Cronje's burghers back, but only to take up a new position where a gun had meantime been placed in readiness for the anticipated tactics of the enemy, and on this piece opening fire upon the advancing Britishers, a retreat was ordered, and White and his force fell back shortly afterwards on Ladysmith.

White had succeeded, however, in forcing an engagement west of the road from Dundee, thus clearing the way for Yule's beaten forces, who streamed past to the right while the fight was in progress, and his object was attained. Some of the men of the Dundee garrison joined in the firing on reaching the protection of White's lines, while others, who were moving nearer to the Boer positions, hoisted white flags while passing within rifle reach of the Free Staters.

Darkness came on soon after the English had retired, and those who had fallen in the fray were searched for by the aid of lanterns. An exceptionally large number of horses had been killed by shrapnel; and their torn bodies, with those of the men killed and wounded on both sides, were found mixed on the field of death; forming a true and ghastly picture in the flickering shadows of the night, of the barbarism and horrors of modern warfare.

The British losses were reported at 120 killed and wounded, while the casualties among the Free Staters numbered sixteen only; six killed and ten wounded.

The intervention of General White between the Free Staters and Yule's demoralized men on their flight from Dundee, saved Penn Symons' ill-fated troops again from disaster. They had escaped from Erasmus on Saturday and Sunday, through the dilatoriness of himself and Joubert; and again on Tuesday, when utterly worn out after their flight across the Biggarsberg, they were rescued from the perils which lay in their path near Reitfontein. The "victors" of Talana Hill must have carried a powerful mascot with them in their subsequent adventures.

MODDERSPRUIT

The successful retreat of General Yule from Dundee added fully 5,000 troops to General White's army and raised that officer's force in Ladysmith to near 12,000 men. With these forces there were the batteries of artillery which had served at Talana and at Elandslaagte, and also the guns that had been retained in Ladysmith for the protection of the chief base of the British in Natal. There would thus be, altogether, seven batteries of artillery, with some mountain guns and Maxims, available for whatever plan of operations the arrival of Joubert and his commandoes to the north and west of White's position might necessitate.

On the 26th of October General Lukas Meyer and his column marched south from their laager behind Talana Hill, and proceeded over the Helpmakaar road, by which Yule and his forces had retreated four days previously. Erasmus and his Pretoria commandoes followed from Dundee. No explanation of this delay in pursuing the beaten British force has been given except one—the Commandant-General's reluctance to press too hard upon a fleeing Christian foe!

During the march of Meyer's commandoes in the wake of Yule's army several dead Britishers were found on the wayside; men who had been overcome by the fatigues and trials of the frightful journey through the Biggarsberg passes. As many as fifteen bodies were buried by the pursuing burghers. The fiery Ben Viljoen also discovered the bodies of some of his dead foes as he was on his way to take part in the fighting at Modderspruit. Crossing the very scene of the battle of Elandslaagte, where his Johannesburgers had been badly cut up in the engagement of the 21st, he found ten Gordon Highlanders unburied. He at once halted his men, had graves dug for the unlucky Tommies, and ordered a salute to be fired as a final token of soldierly respect for his dead foemen.

The Commandant-General moved from Glencoe by Washbank on the 27th, and found himself on the 29th south of Elandslaagte, joining hands with Lukas Meyer's men, and with the Free Staters who had been attacked by White and the Ladysmith army on Tuesday at Reitfontein. Counting the various burgher forces which were thus within reach of Joubert's immediate command on the 29th, the men available for the expected fight on the morrow would be about 8,000 Boers, as against 12,000 English. The British had four times the artillery equipment of the Boers, though the Creusots and pom-poms of the latter had already proved their great superiority over the English guns.

On Sunday, the 29th, several balloons were busy over Ladysmith trying to discover the Boer locations to the west, north, and east; and this, together with information conveyed to Joubert from friendly sources within the enemy's lines, gave warning to be prepared for an attack the following morning.

The Boer positions, tho hastily chosen, were well selected, and showed Joubert's military judgment in defensive operations at its best. His center was strongly posted on and near a flat-topped hill, northeast of Ladysmith, between the Modderspruit and the railway line from Ladysmith to Elandslaagte, near Reitfontein, and distant six or seven miles from the English lines.

The Ermelo, Pretoria, and others burghers, under Commandant Erasmus, with the Irish Brigade under Blake, about 2,000 in all, were the center forces; with Colonel Trichardt and Major Wolmarans in charge of the artillery, which consisted of one large Creusot (Long Tom), two fifteen-pound Creusots, and three pom-poms.

The laager and ammunition wagons were to the right of the long kopje, on the road to Reitfontein.

The left wing, about 4,000 strong, extended eastwards from the center, bending a little south at the extremity, where Lukas Meyer, with the men who fought at Talana, Commandant Weilbach and his Heidelbergers, and General Schalk Burger, with supporting commandoes, held the kopjes near Farquhar's Farm, directly north of Lombard's Kop, the nearest point of the enemy's lines. Captain Pretorius had charge of Meyer's guns, which he served so admirably at Talana, and Schalk Burger had two Krupp howitzers and a pom-pom, which were under the control of Lieutenant Du Toit, making, in all, about one battery of artillery.

Joubert's right bent westward from the long kopje as far as Nicholson's Nek, and was composed mainly of the Free Staters who had held these same hills on Tuesday against White's attack. Some of the Pretoria commando, and Van Dam with his splendid

corps of Johannesburg Police, were a little southeast of Nicholson's Nek to watch for any turning movement in that direction by the enemy.

Joubert's positions were selected with the object of inviting the main British attack upon his center near Pepworth, which he had purposely rendered comparatively weak for the special observation of General White's Ladysmith balloons; his object being to expose the expected assaulting column to a flanking fire and attack by his left division under Meyer, Weilbach, and Burger, which was rendered exceptionally strong in men and guns for that object, and was partly concealed from the enemy's balloons.

General White's plan of attack turned out to be almost exactly what his astute adversary had anticipated.

He sent forward a strong force of Gloucesters, Royal Irish Fusiliers, and other troops with a mountain battery on mules, on Sunday night, with orders to envelop or turn the Boer right—which extended to a position near Nicholson's Kop—by the occupation of this hill, and a surprise action at daylight on Monday morning. In any case this column was expected to cut in between the Free Staters and the Transvaal burghers, and thus to divert attention from the scene of the contemplated main British attack on Joubert's center. This force was under the command of Colonel Carleton. It marched north from Ladysmith under cover of the night, and followed the railway leading to Besters, until reaching a spruit southwest of the Boer right wing, where a turn north was made along a valley, so as to reach the western side of Nicholson's Kop unobserved. Carleton gained his objective, as instructed, but not unobserved, as the sequel was to show.

General White was equally busy with his main forces on that Sunday night. He pushed them forward under the shelter of darkness to the positions from which he intended to strike Joubert's center on the following morning. A strong body of cavalry and mounted infantry under General French was sent eastward, round Lombard's Kop, to protect the advance of the English right column which was to move northward from Ladysmith, parallel with the railway line and under the protection of intervening hills. With Lombard's Kop and Bulwana Hill to his right, Ladysmith in his rear, and all the elevated positions to the immediate north and west of the town within the ambit of his operations, White was well prepared and equipped with his 12,000 men and forty guns to decide the issue of the day with Joubert and his 8,000 burghers.

The Commandant-General was not caught napping when the dawn on that Monday morning partly revealed the rival positions of the two armies to each other. On the descent of the last

balloon from Ladysmith on Sunday night, which told the English general where his adversary's men and guns were located, Joubert moved his center backward from the south of Long Hill to higher ground, leaving a skeleton force behind so as to conceal from the enemy the change of position. A similar disposition was made where Meyer, Burger, and Weilbach were posted, with the result that the attacking British columns would find themselves, in carrying out White's plans, moving within a crescent-shaped field of operations, with both ends of the Boer lines bending towards Ladysmith, and White's entire force in the center.

The battle, which the English have named both Lombard's Kop and Farquhar's Farm, and the Boers, Modderspruit, began soon after four o'clock on Monday morning in a fierce artillery duel. The enemy had sent forward two strong columns, with most of his guns, to a point near the railway at Limit Hill, from whence the main attack on Long Hill was to be made, after the British batteries had prepared the way. Joubert's guns on Long Hill were only seven, but "Long Tom" and his two fifteen-pound Creusot consorts maintained the unequal combat for three or four hours; the big gun sending his shells occasionally a distance of 9,000 yards into the town of Ladysmith.

While this artillery fight was proceeding, Generals Lukas Meyer and Schalk Burger had engaged both French's mounted column and White's right wing so hotly that the plan of assaulting Joubert's center had to be abandoned in order to rescue the forces which Joubert's left had furiously assailed both by Mauser and artillery fire south of Farquhar's Farm. White's right wing thus attacked had previously succeeded in gaining a spur of a hill which the Heidelberg burghers under Weilbach had held as an advanced position of Lukas Meyer's commandoes. The ground thus taken from the Heidelbergers was not long in possession of the enemy. An incident had happened which may be said to have decided the fortunes of the day for the Federal forces.

General Meyer had been unwell since the battle of Talana Hill, and became indisposed during the progress of the fight at Modderspruit. Louis Botha, who had been attached to the Vryheid commando as member of the Volksraad for that district, was at hand. He held no distinct command, but had been an adviser to his friend and colleague, Lukas Meyer, from the outbreak of the war. The command of Meyer's force at a most critical moment in the battle of the 30th was virtually placed in his hands, and he directed the operations which largely helped to achieve the victory that was to be won for the Vierkleur before the sun went down.

He urged a concentration of artillery and Mauser fire upon the

GENERAL JOURNET AT MESS

position gained by a part of White's force from the Heidelbergers. Under cover of this fierce attack, a body of Meyer's men advanced on the English from their concealment, and drove them from the spur of the hill back upon some of the reenforcements which White was sending at that very time to the assistance of his right. During this confusion among the enemy Pretorius played his pom-poms with deadly effect upon the troops which had been forced out into the open, and the enemy's chief loss in dead and wounded in the battle occurred at this turning point.

This unexpected counter attack on his right compelled White to abandon the contemplated blow at Joubert's center, which General Hamilton, with the bulk of the British troops and thirty guns, was to deliver. Generals French and Grimwood had got their men into such serious trouble north of Lombard's Kop, where they had run up against Meyer's and Burger's changed positions, that a large force from the enemy's left column had to be sent across to extricate White's right from its perilous situation. This change in the English general's plan of battle was giving the Boer artillery splendid practice on the flanks of his right and left, and rapidly determining the fortunes of the combat, when two events occurred in this battle of surprises which changed and rechanged the checkered chances of the fray.

At the time when White was forced to send a large part of his center column to the help of his right, and when the Boer guns were pouring a most deadly fire into the English lines, a body of marines in charge of two huge naval guns arrived on the scene, after a continuous journey from Durban, and joined at once in the fight. These guns were most ably handled, and after a few trial shots at the Boer artillery, a shell fired at "Long Tom" at Pepworth killed and wounded half a dozen burghers. This startling intervention of the navals in the battle arrested the tide of Joubert's artillery success, and enabled White to pull his right wing out of Botha's reach, and to prepare his center again for the desired but delayed attack upon Joubert's position at Pepworth.

At this juncture "Long Tom" became suddenly silent, and it was believed in the English lines that the naval guns had succeeded in putting him out of action. What really happened was this:

Ammunition for the Boer guns at the center had given out. Supplies were to the left of the hill on which the now silent Creusot stood, away in a location which was being remorselessly shelled by the British naval guns. No effort was being made by the men in charge of the artillery, or by the burghers on the hill, to go for a fresh supply. Every moment was of vital value, and a

suggestion was actually made to remove the big gun to the laager in the rear so as to save it from possible capture.

Colonel Blake's Irish Brigade were on this hill, as an extra guard for "Long Tom," awaiting impatiently a possible infantry advance by the British. Seeing the situation in the matter of the ammunition, Blake instantly ordered his men to go and procure what was required. The order was carried out with pluck and promptness. They raced across the zone of fire, and the needed ammunition was soon brought for the huge gun. The renewed activity of the big Creusot had such a discouraging effect upon the English batteries and the mass of infantry who were preparing again to advance towards the Boer center that both retired precipitately on Ladysmith, and the fight was over.

The British retreated, having doubtless learned by this time of the surrender of the Irish Fusiliers and Gloucestershire regiments at Nicholson's Nek, two hours previously.

In the work of bringing up the supply of ammunition to Trichardt and Wolmarans, two members of the Irish Brigade were killed and five wounded. Colonel Blake was also wounded in the left wrist by a shell splinter. It was the action of the Irish, however, which enabled the Boer guns to help materially in beating back the advancing British, and to force White to retreat to his base, and this service is a proud memory with the men of the Brigade. The day following the battle General Joubert thanked Blake and his men for their gallant action, and spoke warmly of the courage and devotion they had shown at a critical moment in the varying fortunes of the day.

NICHOLSON'S NEK

In the meantime the attempt to turn the Boer right was far more disastrous in its results to White's army than his futile efforts to envelop the left or force the center of Joubert's position. Carleton, with his Fusiliers and Gloucesters, and a mountain battery with a mule-train of ammunition, had marched, as already related, under cover of night to occupy Nicholson's Kop, which the enemy's balloon had revealed as an advantageous position to gain on the flank of the Boer right wing some seven miles northwest of Ladysmith. The men and mules were nearing their objective in the silence of midnight when, in passing a steep kopje to their right, within about a mile of Nicholson's Kop, they were observed by a brandwacht.

The Boer sentinels fired down upon the advanced portion of

Carleton's column in the darkness before taking to their horses, and it was this action which caused the train of mules to enliven the midnight proceedings of the stealthily-marching Britishers with the confusion which followed. The advance on the hill was arrested for a time, but the officer in command continued his march and negotiated the mountain without any further resistance.

Carleton's force spread itself on the mountain in three or four detached groups; the Fusiliers taking up position nearest the Nek, and the Gloucesters and others seizing the crest line of the hill above, which dominated the environment, and from whence, in the daylight, the whole country south to Ladysmith and east to Pepworth was clearly visible.

The mountain measures some 1,500 yards from east to west, and has an average width of 500 feet; narrowing as it approaches the Nek at the eastern end; while its elevation is about 1,000 feet above the level of the veldt.

To the southeast of Nicholson's Kop a somewhat circular hill of lesser elevation rises, while to the north, behind the right-hand view in the picture of the Kop, the crest of a similar hill can be seen. As a result of Colonel Carleton's midnight adventure, these two hills were occupied during the same night by the Free Staters, and when the morning awoke from its slumbers the English column had small Boer forces on the hills to the right and left anxiously peering across the intervening valleys to discover the strength and positions of the nocturnal invaders.

It was fully believed that the force which had thus pushed itself into the region of the Boer right was to be supported by other troops between the hill and Ladysmith, as this was the only intelligible supposition that could explain the sending forward of a wing of the enemy's troops out of reach of support from his main strength and position. The Boer officers, therefore, prepared for a development of a plan of attack based on this supposition, and anxiously awaited the friendly help of the dawn to enable them to discover the full strength and purpose of the foe.

The task of dealing with the forces from whom the mules had "deserted" fell upon Christian De Wet; that is, his position on the kopje to the east of Nicholson's Nek enabled him to take such measures as the enemy's situation on the mountain demanded. It was a situation and an opportunity which required a man of De Wet's extraordinary capacity and resource to deal with in startling effectiveness, and, tho the credit for this, the greatest single capture of the war on the Boer side, was not claimed by nor given to him at the time, there can be no doubt that his was the mind that planned and carried out the capture of the English

column. It was the earliest of a long list of similar achievements on the part of a man who has taken more British prisoners on the battle-field than any general who has ever fought an English enemy since the surrender of the British at Yorktown, Virginia.

When daylight revealed the positions and the forces of the British on the mountain, De Wet resolved upon a coup similar to that of Commandant Smit when General Colley's troops were found lining the top of Majuba Hill. Both movements showed the superb courage of the Boer in facing great odds and a formidable position, having nothing but his rifle with which to meet troops armed with both rifles and bayonets. Charging up a hill, however, as Boers charge, is not a mere exhibition of reckless daring. It is something better. It is a cool, deliberate advance, not in a rushing body, but individually; each man taking cover as he moves, now rapidly, then slowly, as the nature of the ground permits; always halting when a head appears above, and seldom missing his object in the aim which tells of the deadly intent of the mounting foeman. Given average courage and a steady aim, the advantage is more on the side of the man who is seen climbing a hillside, rifle in hand, than on that of the man who witnesses this fearless action on the part of his enemy. The moral prestige of the act has its effect upon the man who has to defend his position against the approaching attack of the intrepid climber, and when moral courage stands behind the physical in a fight on the battle-field, the possessor of both is generally found the victor in the combat. It is also well known that troops firing down from an elevation—in rifle firing—show far less accuracy in shooting than in the reverse position of riflemen who fire upward. All this is known to the Boer, who is likewise aware that when his foe on the hill fails to hit him as he climbs, and sees comrades falling by bullets coming from below, he is not likely to make much of a stand when the climber finally reaches the level of his enemy's position. Another fact in connection with the capture of Nicholson's Kop also tends to explain De Wet's easy victory over his numerically superior foemen. The smokeless powder of the Mauser rifles did not reveal the points from whence the hissing missiles winged their deadly flight. The English heard their enemy's fire, but did not generally know from what quarter they were being shot at by marksmen not always visible to the eye.

The hill to the south of Nicholson's Kop, from whence the Boer outposts stampeded the mules, was held in the early morning by Andries Cronje, of Winburg, with his men, some 300 strong. Commandant Nel, with the Heilbron burghers, worked round to the left of the mountain to cooperate with the Kroonstad

NICHOLSON'S NEK, SCENE OF DE WET'S FIRST VICTORY

men under De Wet, who were to cross the intervening valley between Nicholson's Kop and the round hill seen to the right of the long hill in the picture. Van Dam and his Johannesburg Police had gone south, nearer to Ladysmith, during the night, to discover whether Carleton's column was part of a greater advancing force, or only an independent wing of White's army. De Wet, Cronje, and Nel had from 700 to 900 men only in the fight with rifles which commenced between them and Carleton's two regiments, and the Boer plan was to shoot the enemy off Nicholson's Kop down to where Van Dam and Cronje of Winburg would be ready to receive them.

De Wet's plan, like all his subsequent successful modes of outwitting English officers and capturing English soldiers, was as simple as it was audacious. Cronje and Nel were to spread their men on all points east and south that could command the position on the Kop on which the Fusiliers and Gloucesters were posted, so as to engage all the attention of the enemy and make him think that end of the mountain was alone the object of Boer attack. Under cover of this maneuver, De Wet, with 250 Kroonstad men, was to steal round to the north of the Kop, scale the opposite side to that held by the enemy, and drive him by rifle fire down in the hollow, where Cronje and Van Dam were to catch him between two fires should he attempt to regain the unlucky track which brought him to Nicholson's Kop.

When the morning's light showed Carleton's true location on the mountain, De Wet led his men down from his position and across the valley as secretly and silently as the enemy had marched in the dark, and the Kroonstad burghers began the climb of the Kop on its northwestern side. Not a sentinel or scout was found on that end of the hill! While these movements were in progress, Andries Cronje and his Winburgers engaged in a long-range rifle contest with the Fusiliers who were on the declivity of the Kop near the Nek. The English were attacked from three sides, but very little injury was done during the greater part of the morning. De Wet's men were in the meantime slowly climbing the hill from behind. All this time the thunder of the English and Boer guns was heard to the east, where the main battle was raging; the English artillery belching forth his shrapnel from near Lombard's Kop, and "Long Tom" and his companion Creusots more than holding their own from the hills near Pepworth. The tide of battle was being watched with fluctuating hopes from both English and Boer positions on the hills around Nicholson's Kop, while De Wet was steadily carrying his men up the steep side of the mountain to where the Gloucesters held the ground. Finally the burghers

reached the top of the hill, and the Gloucesters soon began to feel the effect of their fire. The English were behind stone sangars, hastily put up, while the Boers took such shelter as the crest line of the mountain offered on the opposite side to that occupied by their enemies. It was now a question of shooting and cover, and the British soon found their sangars unable to protect them from the accurate fire of their assailants. Shortly after the appearance of the burghers opposite the position of the Gloucesters, the Heilbron men topped the Kop to the left of the enemy, and the British were now exposed to a converging fire before which they soon retreated down upon the positions held by the Fusiliers at the Nek.

What has taken only a few minutes to describe was the result of nearly four hours' deliberate, careful advance by De Wet, and of long-range firing on both sides lower down the platberg, there being no artillery engaged in the encounter. The British, however, had suffered from the better shooting of the Boers, and already the wounded and dying on the hilltop were calling for water which was not to be had. The sun was pouring down its scorching rays upon the mountain, adding the suffering of thirst to the punishment which the Boer fire was steadily and continuously inflicting upon the doomed column. The Boer officers were still uncertain as to the outcome of the main battle going on six miles to the southeast, and De Wet's purpose was to force Carleton to fight for his position until Van Dam should return with his Johannesburgers, or until other forces might come from the nearest section of Joubert's right. It was about one o'clock, and the Boer fire was growing more deadly in its effect, when the British uplifted the white flag and brought the fight of the morning to a close. Colonel Carleton, 37 officers, and over 900 men laid down their arms, and the surrender was actually made to a force less than the number of troops who had given up the fight! In fact, it was not until Van Dam appeared on the scene from the south, with 800 Johannesburg Police, that the work of disarmament was actively begun by the victors.

It has been said in every English report of this encounter that the English fought until their ammunition gave out, and that the white flag was hoisted without the consent of the senior officers in command. The facts as related by the Boer officers do not bear out this contention. The cartridge pouches of the Tommies were found not alone not to be empty after the "Cease Fire" had sounded, but to contain what could have served for further fighting if the British had not had enough of it. Whether the white flag was or was not raised by the order of senior authority, it is an undoubted fact that no officer countermanded

BRITISH SOLDIERS CAPTURED AT NICHOLSON'S NEK ARRIVING IN PRETORIA

the order, or took steps to recall the "Cease Fire" signal by one to call the men again to action. The surrender was made on the merits of the fight of the morning; the English believing from the steadier and more widely extended fire of the Boers that the force arrayed against them was much stronger than it actually turned out to be. In reality, De Wet and his 250 men by his admirable tactics and their splendid shooting had decided the fate of the two crack regiments of the British army on the top of Nicholson's Kop.

Nor did the number of killed and wounded of Carleton's men offer any imperative reason for the raising of the white flag. Ten per cent. of casualties are supposed to give a reasonable ground for a surrender or a retreat, when the chances of victory are not otherwise promising. In this instance the British killed and wounded were a trifle over this percentage, but the fact of their being within sight of their base, only six or seven miles from Ladysmith, ought to have called for a longer and more determined stand. The casualty list of the whole battle of Modderspruit is mixed in the English reports, and the relative losses by White and Carleton are not given separately.

The Boer losses in the capture of the mountain and of the British column fell almost entirely upon Christian De Wet's Kroonstaders, and these were given in the reports of the battle as 6 killed; 3 seriously, and 20 slightly wounded; in all, 29—a small penalty to pay for the capture of two whole British regiments, and near forty British officers, plus some guns of a mountain battery.

After the battle, Boers carried water up from the valley to the English wounded on the mountain, and showed every humane attention to their suffering enemies. There was no show of triumph over beaten foes, nor a single offensive word addressed to the comrades and companions in arms of the "pig-sticking" Lancers of Elandslaagte. The signal victory had been won by men who had proved, by their valor in combat, and by their generosity to their vanquished foes, their preeminent claim to the liberty for which they fought.

General White in his official report of the whole battle sums up his known total losses in the day's engagement as follows: "Including under the head of 'missing' those taken prisoners, our losses this day amounted to 63 non-commissioned officers and men killed; 10 officers and 239 non-commissioned officers and men wounded, and 37 officers and 917 non-commissioned officers and men missing." A total of 1,266 British casualties, with a battery of mountain guns.

These figures are instructive. The number of killed and wounded was less than one-third of the number who surrendered, and no more than one in forty of the total men engaged in the battle! When it is also taken into account that the English had fully four guns for every Boer gun, and three men for every two burghers, it will be seen how poorly the crack regiments of the British army upheld the vaunted valor of their records on the field of Modderspruit.

The Boer casualties were as follows: The artillery, 3 killed and 8 wounded; Lukas Meyer's commando, 4 dead and 6 wounded; Irish Brigade, 2 dead and 5 wounded; Johannesburg Police, 1 dead and 13 wounded; the Free Staters, 6 killed and 23 wounded; making the total Federal loss 16 men killed, and 55 wounded.

General Joubert's victory was signal and complete. He repelled the attack upon him at all points, and compelled his antagonist, despite his superior force in men and guns, to retreat disorganized on Ladysmith, leaving over 1,000 prisoners in the hands of the victors. There was, however, here, as at Dundee, the same woful neglect of opportunity in allowing the enemy to retreat without a prompt and effective pursuit. Colonel Blake told me that both he and other officers had urgently pressed the Commandant-General to follow up the beaten British forces while suffering under the effects of the day's severe punishment, and to deal them a crushing blow before they could recover their shattered morale. Joubert would not listen to such appeals. He engaged in a prayer meeting after learning of White's retreat and of the surrender of Carleton's column, and remonstrated with those who pressed upon him what was the obvious and imperative military obligation of the day's successful operations; his reply being, "It would be barbarous to pursue and slaughter a beaten Christian foe!"

It was widely reported in the British press that the disaster to the English at Nicholson's Nek was due to the treachery of Colonel Carleton's guides. The Natal Government at once denied the statement, in the following terms:

"Durban, November 2nd.—The Colonial Secretary (of Natal) telegraphed last night: The following authentic information has been received by the Governor, and is published for general information:

"The allegation in a local paper that Colonel Carleton's column was led into a trap by treacherous guides is absolutely without foundation. The column was personally led by a staff officer, thoroughly acquainted with the locality. The two guides with them were Colonial gentlemen of well-known loyalty and repute."

This full and prompt denial of the war correspondents' dishonest

efforts to explain away the significance of De Wet's first noted exploit was due to the fact that the guides in question were compromised in the fictitious story, and compelled the Natal Government to vindicate their honor. But, strange to say, no Jingo journal in England published this official and emphatic contradiction of the fabricated story of treachery.

A Boer doctor at Modderspruit attending a severely-wounded British soldier, who appeared to be exceptionally intelligent for a Tommy, asked him for whom he thought he was fighting, country or capitalists? The reply was significant: "Well," replied the soldier, "I won't swear it is not for the Mahdi! I cannot, after what I have seen of the Boers on the field, and since I have been wounded in this battle, believe I am fighting for the Queen of England."

One of the several startling incidents of the battle of Modderspruit was the fact that the two Boer officers who were mainly instrumental in winning it have not yet been credited with that distinction, nor have they claimed any such credit for themselves. Nor is it a less interesting fact that the two men who thus modestly began their triumphs in the second great battle of the war should have shown themselves afterward to be two of the most capable generals in the Federal armies.

GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

Louis Botha comes of a fighting stock. His paternal grandfather was a captain in the French Navy, though of German origin. He emigrated to South Africa and settled down to a farming life, married a Dutch lady, and became one with the Boers in their aspirations for a national existence in the land of their adoption, and in their distrust of English rule and rulers.

Louis Botha was born at Vrede, in the Orange Free State. His father had fought in all the native wars waged by and against the Dutch settlers, and bequeathed a patriotic record to his five sons, who have all held commands in the present war. Louis is the second son, and is thirty-six years old. The head of the family was the late General Philip Botha, one of the most gallant and courteous men it has ever been my good fortune to meet and the honor to know. In physical appearance Louis Botha is a faultless specimen of robust manhood, standing near six feet high, and built accordingly. The handsome face is of the German mold, with bluish eyes, strong nose, and intellectual expression. He wears a slight brownish mustache and beard. The figure is erect, striking, and noble, the pose of the head indicating great power and capac-

COMMANDANT-GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

ity. The dominant feature of the face is that of combined manliness and kindness, with a suggestive reserve of immense strength; he is the kind of man who would prefer the ordinary pursuits of peaceful life to the tumult and passions of warfare, but who would shirk from no danger nor sacrifices to uphold a cause which would command his assenting loyalty.

In Great Britain or Ireland Louis Botha would be classed as a gentleman farmer. His home since manhood has been near the border of Zululand, in the Vryheid district, which place he represented in the Volksraad. His farm is a very large one, and was worked by a number of Zulus, whose devotion to this Boer hero of this war was shown in a marked manner. He had been in Pretoria for a whole year attending to his Parliamentary duties, and unable to visit his farm owing to the crisis which Mr. Chamberlain's war-making diplomacy had created. When war was declared he had to leave everything he possessed in the hands of these natives, and he told me that his farm had never been better worked, or his stock more carefully attended to, than during the period of his (then) twelve months' absence from his home.

General Botha has had very little military experience, and no military study. He is one of nature's ready-made generals, cut and fashioned on lines of natural genius. He fought under General Lukas Meyer when the latter went to the assistance of Dinizulu, as already related. He also joined his friend in the founding of the "New Republic" in 1884.

In the same year, Meyer's little Utopia attracted among others a family named Emmet, from Smallendeal, in Cape Colony. Mr. John Emmet, with his four sons and two daughters, settled in the Vryheid district, and became neighbors of Louis Botha. Miss Emmet, a handsome and accomplished young lady, soon attracted the ardent attention of young Botha, and some sixteen years ago they became man and wife. There are four children of this happy union, two boys and two girls. Mrs. Botha is of Irish extraction on the father's side, and is proud of claiming a blood relationship with Robert Emmet. I found General Botha thoroughly conversant with the salient facts of Irish history; a result, of course, of his marriage with a lady whose name recalls that of one of the "revolutionary saints" of Irish political martyrology. Addressing the kreigsraad of his officers on the eve of the battle of Colenso, Botha quoted from the speech of Robert Emmet a sentiment appropriate to the struggle of the Boer nation against the enemy who had exacted the sacrifice of Emmet's young life in the cause of Irish freedom.

General Botha is a man of conspicuous natural culture, and fairly

conversant with the trend of modern progress throughout the world. He speaks English correctly, with a slight Boer accent, and has a soft and agreeable voice. His is a personality which impresses you at once with its magnetic influence over men; a figure of striking potency and of great strength of purpose, combined with all the natural traits which offer you a testimony of the highest honor and personal integrity on behalf of the man before you. It was the possession of all these qualities, together with great simplicity of life and character, which so suddenly gave to

GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA AND WIFE

Louis Botha the wonderful hold upon the Boer nation that enabled him to win many brilliant victories over English generals. With this war his name will be forever associated as that of one of the world's greatest patriot soldiers.

GENERAL DE WET

Christian De Wet is much more of a typical Boer than Louis Botha, in both looks and manner. He possesses none of the distinguished soldierly appearance of the Transvaal general, and speaks no tongue but his native Taal. He is some forty-nine years old, squarely built, standing about five feet nine in height,

and wearing much less of a darkish beard and mustache than most of his alleged pictures gratuitously adorn him with. The face is not one that would arrest attention in virtue of any striking feature or expression; though the keen searching gray eyes and massive jaws speak of a character for dogged persistency and alertness of action which indicate their relationship to a strong personality.

GENERAL CHRISTIAN DE WET

Some of De Wet's Irish admirers trace a resemblance — on the evidence of one of his pictures — between him and the late Mr. Parnell, in general appearance; a comparison which may have given birth to the legend (believed in by some very romantic souls, I am told,) that the greatest guerrilla general of modern times is no other than the late leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party still in the flesh. There is a transient likeness to Mr. Parnell in De Wet, when the face is seen in profile, with the hat on, and covering the large head and broad forehead which were not conspicuous features in the physical structure of the Irish leader. The head and face are more powerful and massive than Mr. Parnell's, but possess none of the refinement or handsome lines which gave to the latter's looks, previous to his illness in 1887, their well-remembered impress of dignified attractiveness.

De Wet is of unmixed Dutch extraction, and was born in that southeastern district of the Free State in which he has gained

so many of his signal successes over the British. He belongs to the Boer farming class, and possesses all their best qualities; not the least of which is a thorough detestation of the incurable hypocrisy of the English as rulers and as the boasted guardians of liberty. Probably no two men in the Boer nation placed less faith in the peace-seeking professions of the Chamberlain-Milner diplomacy than Paul Kruger and Christian De Wet, and none have been more justified by time and events in the consistency of their distrust.

De Wet is more familiar with the topography of the Free State and Transvaal than any other of the Federal generals. He fought in the war of 1880-81, and resided subsequently at Lydenburg, which district he represented for a time in the Volksraad at Pretoria. In recent years he removed back to his native Free State, and was following an ordinary farming life near Kroonstad when war broke out; he being at the time a member of the Free State Raad.

He is by disposition a silent man, and took no part in the controversies which led up to the war. In social intercourse, however, he is genial and good-humored, and has the reputation of being a capital story-teller of veldt life and of Rooinek peculiarities.

The allegation that De Wet could act in any way towards a captured foeman except in accord with the dictates of an honorable nature, is but a calumny worthy of the exemplars of that chivalry which could burn De Wet's house in retaliation for the defeats which he inflicted upon British troops, and thereby hunt his wife and children from their home. The whole character and disposition of the man are clearly seen in his frank expression and modest bearing when spoken to, and he leaves no doubt upon the mind of friend or foe as to the honesty and uprightness of his motives in any act or emergency in which he plays the part of a soldier and a citizen.

The secret of his marvelous successes in the war is one of these phenomena in the sudden development of genius which can be more easily marveled at than explained. Possibly the parade-ground stupidity of his foes, rather than any striking ability in himself, would be his own method of explaining how and why he was so often able to take advantage of the elephantine tactics and elaborate blundering of British generals and officers, whose incapacity has been ministering to the scoffing criticism of a military world for the past two years. A few neatly expressed judgments of his upon three English generals may offer an indication of his own conception of what military qualities go to the making of a competent commander of forces in South Africa. Asked by

one of his many English prisoners his opinion of Lord Roberts, his reply was: "I would rather hear yours as to what generalship he would be likely to show if he had to fight, say, 200,000 Boers with 35,000 British." On General French alone of all the British officers he passed a complimentary judgment: "He is the only 'Boer' general in the British army;" while the modest and retiring defender of Mafeking was summed up in the joking expression: "He would make a most successful war correspondent for a comic military journal!"

Nature endowed De Wet with a prodigal share of common sense,

MRS. CHRISTIAN DE WET AND CHILDREN

which has not been spoiled or diluted by any university education, or study of Lord Wolseley's military works. His intimate acquaintance with the topography of the country he has been defending, joined to the possession of a clear head and a dauntless heart, explain why, as a result of his innumerable exploits in foiling and fooling the generals of a universally-detested Power, he has been, in all probability, the most popular living personality of the civilized world during the last two years.

De Wet is the father of twelve children, and his two eldest sons are fighting with him in the field. Mrs. De Wet is still young-looking and handsome. Her prompt and contemptuous expulsion of Piet De Wet from her door in Johannesburg when he attempted to enlist her influence in securing the surrender of his great brother, shows that the hero of Nicholson's Nek and of fifty other victories has a wife worthy of his own brave and unconquerable nature.

Chapter XV

ENGLAND'S KAFFIR ALLIES

KAFFIRS EMPLOYED AS ARMED AUXILIARIES IN THE WAR—OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF KAFFIR ASSISTANCE IN THE DEFENSE OF MAFEKING—PRAISE GIVEN TO THE FINGO CONTINGENT—A PHOTOGRAPH OF BRITISH KAFFIR ALLIES—THE ARMING OF KHAMA'S AND LINCHWE'S SAVAGES—THE MASSACRE OF DEREDEPOORT.

THE tactics of the enemy pending the arrival of reenforcements from England and India were devised with the object of keeping the Boer forces as scattered as possible, so as to prevent concentration on Natal or the north of Cape Colony. In this plan of campaign the English were eminently successful during October and November. The whole western and northern border of the Transvaal had to be watched against threatened attacks from Rhodesia, and fully 1,500 men of the Marico, Rustenburg, and Zoutpansberg commandoes were required for this task. A Chartered Company force from Bulawayo menaced Rhodes Drift, in the extreme north, while at Deredepoort and other points on the northwest border other Rhodesian forces, British and Kaffir, demanded the constant presence of guarding burghers on the frontier. These men were hung up, as it were, away from the scenes of active hostilities in the south and east, thus greatly reducing the strength with which the little State was enabled to defend itself against large armies advancing from Durban and the Cape on landing from England.

By a timely precaution on the part of the Transvaal, the Swazis were prevented from becoming the tools of the English. General Schalk Burger, with a strong commando and guns, patrolled the frontier after war was declared, assuring Bunu and other chiefs that the Boers were intent on no movement against them, but were strong enough to chastise any force that would attempt to aid the British. English emissaries were specially watched by men of Lieutenant C. Botha's Swazi Police, who had instructions to deal summarily with any of them found instigating native disturbances. The British were thus foiled in their intrigues for creating active native hostility in the east and south, but they succeeded, all the

same, in forcing the Republics to keep a large percentage of their small forces watching for possible Kaffir hostility in their rear.

In the west Baden-Powell made open use of the Fingoes, Baralongs, and Cape "Boys," both in his offensive and defensive operations at Mafeking. This charge has been indignantly denied by a portion of the Jingo press, as have so many other charges made by the Boers, only to be duly verified afterwards. There are two pieces of evidence confirming General Cronje's complaint against the arming of black auxiliaries by Baden-Powell which it will be impossible to refute. One is a photograph published in the "Cape Times" on the 8th of August, 1900, which I reproduce, showing these very Kaffirs, armed and equipped, under their British officers; and the other is the actual, official recognition of their service by no less a person than the defender of Mafeking himself.

On the 10th of November, 1899, the following "official despatch" of the 4th of that month was published in the "Mafeking Mail":

"The Colonial contingent under Captain Goodyear has done splendid service to-day in occupying a position at the brickfields. The contingent, tho exposed to a withering fire, maintained its position, and was supported in a capital manner by the Fingo contingent under Mr. David Webster."

Further, in "Lloyd's Weekly News" of April 1, 1900, appears the following:

"On March 14th Reuter got through the subjoined message from Mafeking: 'To cover our advance on Jackal Tree Fort a detachment of Baralong natives were despatched to make a feint attack on Fort Snyman, a work recently erected by the Boers, threatening our most advanced western position. They succeeded in creeping to within thirty yards of the enemy, many of whom were sleeping outside, and when near the fort poured in two or three rapid volleys. Trooper Webb got sufficiently close to the fort to blow out the brains of one of the enemy. The natives then beat a rapid retreat, in accordance with instructions previously given to them, having inflicted some losses upon the enemy. In the brickfields the Cape Boys have been reenforced by a detachment of Protectorate troops, under Captain Fitzclarence.'"

In measuring out honors and lavish praise for bravery and distinguished services in the war, Lord Roberts has seemingly overlooked the deeds of his Fingo, Cape "Boys," and Baralong mercenaries. Nor did the "Mafficking" mobs in England act more generously by offering all their cheers to the English defenders of the besieged town, and forgetting the assistance rendered by the

GENERAL SCHALK BURGER'S COMMANDO

savage allies of their troops to the hero who enlisted Kaffir auxiliaries against the Boers.

Both Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour had declared in Parliament that no native or colored allies would be sought for, or accepted, by the British in the war. The records of the siege of Mafeking show how that promise has been redeemed. But there was nothing new or startling in this violation of an English pledge. The entire history of England's dealings with South Africa is replete with a stereotyped British double-dealing, persistent and incurable, and it was in a spirit of strict consistency with this record that the Colonial Secretary should righteously insist, on the outbreak of hostilities, that President Kruger would be held responsible "for acts done contrary to the methods of civilized warfare." The letters of "pig-sticking" Lancers from the bloody field of Elandslaagte, and the official despatch of the "Mafeking Mail" of November 4th —within three weeks of Mr. Chamberlain's virtuous demand—were but the usual facts which invariably build a connecting link of loathsome hypocrisy between British professions and performances in matters relating to the Dark Continent.

There are, however, blacker deeds than the above to be added to the discredit of the enemy of the Boer ere this chapter on England's Kaffir allies is closed. I have yet to relate the story of Linchwe, and how he was instigated to join in a British attack on a small laager comprising Boer women and children at Deredepoort. There is no more repulsive deed to be found in the annals of this war. It happened in this way:

A force of Rhodesian troopers from Bulawayo, under Major Wilson, advanced on Rhodes Drift on the 17th October, expecting little, if any, hostile effort to bar the passage over the Limpopo at this extreme northern end of the Transvaal. The British were disagreeably surprised to find the wooded banks of the river occupied by a body of Boers who were prepared to meet them. These men had only finished a ten days' continuous and rapid march from Pietersburg, under the command of Field Cornets Briel, Du Preez, Alberts, and Kelly. They numbered some 300 burghers. On learning that the English were two miles north of the river, they resolved upon an attack. An engagement which lasted several hours took place on the 21st, on the Rhodesian side of the river; Field Cornets Du Preez and Alberts attacking one side of the English position, and Field Cornets Briel and Kelly the other. The special correspondent of the "Volksstem," who was fighting with Briel's contingent, reported that "the enemy fled into the bush, disorganized, leaving their fort and stores. We captured 17 prisoners, 8 wagons loaded with provisions and ammunition,

together with mules and oxen. The enemy's fort (entrenchment?), which was attacked by Du Preez, hoisted a white flag twice. When asked by Du Preez, at a distance of a hundred yards, if they were going to surrender, he was answered by a volley which killed two of our men. We had one Maxim and one Nordenfelt. The enemy, who numbered 500 or 600, retired in the Tuli direction."

A despatch from Bulawayo, via Beira, published by Reuter, admitted that the British loss in this encounter was 4 killed and 14 wounded, with several men missing.

This small victory appears to have enraged the Rhodesian officers, who had counted upon an easy entry into the north of the Transvaal for raiding purposes. There was a loss of prestige, too, incurred in the estimation of native chiefs like Khama, Linchwe, and others who would learn of the Boer defeat of the Chartered forces, and it was determined to send two armored trains from Bulawayo, with men and Maxims, to patrol the line along the Transvaal border from Palapye, south to Gaberones. This Rhodesian expedition fared no better than the attempt to surprise the Boers at Rhodes Drift. General Snyman, with a few hundred burghers from the Marico district, crossed the border at Krokodil Pool on the 24th, blew up the bridge, and awaited the arrival of the trains, about whose movements he was accurately informed by Dutch missionaries in Khama's country. The trains were themselves surprised at the unexpected attack by Snyman, and, after exchanging a few shots with the Boer guns, the officers in charge of the Bulawayo force steamed back to the north.

Linchwe, Chief of the Bakathla tribe, who is the head of the natives inhabiting the border territory through which the railway from Mafeking to Bulawayo runs for a considerable distance, was astounded at the refusal of the English to fight Snyman, and at the retreat of the trains. The Bakathla had raided Transvaal cattle under the instigation of the Chartered Company's officials, and the Boers were now showing themselves able to drive back both British and Kaffirs with ease. This fact alarmed Linchwe, and he began to waver in his adhesion to the English side. Commandant Du Plessis, of Rustenburg, with whom Linchwe's father had placed the present chief, when young, for a number of years, was sent by President Kruger to Deredepoort in the hope of counteracting the efforts of the Chartered Company to enlist the Bakathla tribe on the British side. On the arrival of Du Plessis, General Snyman went south to Mafeking, taking most of the Boer commando with him, in the belief that Linchwe would be held neutral through the friendly influence of his former host and acquaintance.

The Chartered Company, however, had distributed rifles and

ammunition among both Khama's tribe and the Bakathla. Once in possession of weapons and cartridges, the natives were only too willing to engage in any movement which promised loot and cattle in return for their services, and they ranged themselves on the side of the British.

Khama's men were utilized by the Chartered Company's officers to keep the Boers at Rhodes Drift in check, by assembling in force at Selukwe, a little to the south of that region on the Limpopo, while an attack was planned upon the Boer post at Deredepoort, where Linchwe's savages were to cooperate with the English.

On the 9th of November the following despatch was received and published at Lourenzo Marquez from Beira :

"Tuli (Reuter).—Colonel Plumer to-day received the following from Palapye :

"'Khama has sent another regiment to Selukwe Kopje. Its strength is 370, comprising 191 Martini-Henry, and 171 muzzle-loaders. This makes the total strength at the Selukwe Kopje 700. He has also sent 150 men to the Macloutsie, comprising 75 Martini-Henry and 75 muzzle-loaders.'"

The northern Boer force being thus menaced by Khama's men, it was resolved, on learning of General Snyman's retirement with most of his commando south to Mafeking, to attack the Boer post at Deredepoort, a small trading village on the Marico River, opposite Gaberones, and about seventy miles north of Mafeking.

The attack was not resolved upon until the hero of the enterprise, a Rhodesian officer named Llewellyn, had ascertained, through Kaffir scouts, that the little garrison had been still further denuded of its men in patrols to the north and south, leaving only some 60 burghers and about 40 villagers in the place. The assault was planned for a Saturday morning before daybreak, with a Rhodesian force of 200 troopers, with a Maxim gun, and some 500 of Linchwe's savages.

The Bakathla warriors were not led by Linchwe, but by one of his subordinate chiefs. They were ordered to cross the river noiselessly, south of the village, and to await the action of the Maxim by Llewellyn's force of Britishers on the north side; the plan being to drive the Boers from the village by the fire of the Maxim, into the ranks of the crouching savages on the southern side.

It was about three in the morning of November 25 when the little community were startled by the fire of the English gun, and the Boers had barely time to dress when they found the Kaffirs within the village. Commandant Kirsten, in charge of

the camp, and Mr. Barnard, a member of the Volksraad, who chanced to be at Deredepoort, took command of the small force, consisting, all told, of 76 men, and so promptly did the Boer fighting instinct respond to the startling situation that, in a very few minutes, every Mauser was dealing out its deadly welcome to the savage assailants on the one hand and their, if possible, more cowardly British commanders and comrades on the other. The attack, however, was so sudden and unexpected that the Kaffirs had entered several houses, and had time to butcher the

Reproduced from the "Cape Times" (British), August 8, 1900

"THE BLACK WATCH" AT MAFEKING

half-awakened inmates before any resistance could be offered. They killed a lady, an American by birth, in bed, and mortally wounded her husband, who was in the act of rising when the savages burst into the room. A German trader was disembowelled and otherwise tortured, while an English photographer named Early was hacked to death with spears. The brave Barnard rallied his little force, and soon drove the Kaffirs clear of the laager, while another portion of his men were keeping the British troopers at bay on the other side of the village. Barnard, however, was shot dead after the fight had gone on for an hour, but so coolly had the Boers met the double attack with their accurate rifle fire that over fifty of the Kaffirs lay dead around the laager, while the valiant British had retreated on finding that the little post on the river was not so

easily surprised and captured as Llewellyn and his brother officers had planned.

The Kaffirs had taken over a score of the villagers prisoner in the first assault on the place. Most of these were women and children, and all of them would have been murdered but for the intervention of a British soldier named Bateson, who had been fighting with the savages, and who exercised much influence over them.

No news of this engagement found its way into a British paper. Doubtless Jingo organs will be found who will doubt the truth of the story now told. In that event the following letter, dated "Mochudie, 29th November, 1899," will settle the matter, both as to the capture of the women and children by the Bakathla, and the fact of these British allies having taken part in the fight of the 25th :

"To the Commandant of the Boer Laager, Krokodil Pool, Mochudie, 29th November, 1899.—I have here 17 women and children, who were captured by the Bakathla on the 25th November. I enclose letter from one of them. I wish to give them over to you safely. They have, since I received them, been supplied with every comfort I could give, and I deeply regret that women should have been mixed up with the attack by our soldiers of the 25th November. The Bakathla had instructions not to cross the border, but got out of hand completely. I have communicated the contents of this letter to the detachments of our mounted men who may be patrolling in your direction, to avoid any complications.—Signed, Noel Llewellyn, Capt. B. S. A. (Police Commandant of advance armored trains)."

It was absolutely untrue to assert that the savages were not instructed to cross the border. This duty was deliberately assigned to them, as a part of the plan of attack which Llewellyn had himself devised.

The British and the Bakathla retired across the border after their exploit.

As pointed out in the chapter relating to the Boer advance on Dundee, armed Kaffirs were employed by the English from the very first days of the war. British officers have continued to so use these savages in the field, in increasing numbers, and with little or no disguise, on through the whole campaign, in shameless disregard of ministerial declarations that their assistance would not be utilized in the conflict with the Republics.

An official list of the persons murdered by the savage allies of the British was published, and included the following names :

Murdered—Stephanus Fouche, Mrs. Pieters, wife of the storekeeper at Deredepoort (an American lady); Anna M. M. Fourie, née Kroukamp, wife of W. J. Fourie; Z. L. Pretorius, sen.; J. S. Pretorius; G. Rooseboom; Early (an Englishman), photographer; C. W. Potgieter; Paul Potgieter, aged 15.

Wounded—J. L. Kroukamp.

Missing—Johanna Potgieter, née v. d. Bergh, with five children; Carolina, aged 29; Emma, 8 to 9; Jan, Pieter, and Adriaan; also her granddaughter, Z. L. Pretorius, about 4; also her daughter Johanna, wife of Davis Smut; Cornelia Potgieter, née Roos, wife of Dr. D. J. Pretorius, son of Z. L. Pretorius; Adriaan and Christiaan, 10 and 8 years old, the sons of widow J. C. Kroukamp, née Rensberg; R. A. Fourie, 5 years, son of J. W. Fourie; Gert Coetzee, Antonie Kruger; F. Pieters, storekeeper at Deredepoort.

Some of the murdered villagers were relatives of President Kruger.

Chapter XVI

MAFEKING AND KIMBERLEY

DEFENSES OF MAFEKING—INVESTED BY CRONJE—BADEN-POWELL'S ABUSE OF THE RED CROSS FLAG—KAFFIRS USED FOR COVER BY BRITISH OFFICERS—SNYMAN REPLACES CRONJE—BADEN-POWELL IN SORTIE USES DUM-DUM BULLETS—IMPORTANCE OF KIMBERLEY—INVESTED BY WESSELS AND DE LA REY—CHIVALRY OF DU PLESSIS—ENGAGEMENT WITH ARMORED TRAIN AT MACKFARLANE'S SIDING—DEFENSES AND ENVIRONS OF KIMBERLEY—DE AAR THE BASE OF RELIEF—BOERS FAIL TO SEIZE DE AAR OUT OF REGARD FOR CAPE MINISTRY—PRELIMINARY FIGHT AT BELMONT—BOMBARDMENT OF KIMBERLEY.

SKIRMISHES of varying importance and results continued round Mafeking after the capture of the armored train at Kraaipan by De la Rey. General Cronje pushed his lines of investment nearer the town, as opportunity offered, and Colonel Baden-Powell showed much readiness and resource in his methods of defense.

The town stands on ground a little higher than the veldt from which the Boers had to besiege it, and this fact was greatly to the advantage of the defenders. Bomb-proof shelters had been constructed before war was declared, while an adequate supply of ammunition (comprising Mark IV. cartridges) and food for a prolonged resistance had been carefully provided. Approaches on all sides likely to invite an attack were defended by dynamite mines, while the garrison had the active assistance, in the task of vigilantly guarding the place, of 500 or 600 natives of the Baralong and other Kaffir tribes.

General Cronje was only obeying the rules of civilized warfare when he notified Colonel Baden-Powell that he would begin to shell the place at a certain hour. The fact that he gave such notification, however, was not mentioned in the reports which reached London in the earlier stages of the siege. On the contrary, much was made in these despatches of a shell which had hit the Mafeking Hospital. This was denounced as a barbarous act, and adduced as proof that the Boers were not inclined to regard the usages of civilized custom in their conduct of the war. But what are the facts? When Cronje learned that the building

had been hit, he wrote to regret the occurrence, and pointed out that "the hospital bore no distinguishing flag, such as is usually employed as a sign to the besieging forces." Cronje also proposed that the women and children should be removed out of the town to a place beyond the reach of shells or dangers of assaults; but no assent would be given to this proposal. Red Cross flags were soon placed over the building set apart for these non-combatants, over the hospital, the convent, the prison, and several other places utilized for defensive purposes; an arrangement which was far more consonant with Baden-Powell's ideas of fighting an enemy than with the letter or spirit of the Geneva Convention.

In one of the earliest skirmishes between the besieged and besiegers a number of Kaffirs got mixed in the fighting. Some of these were taken prisoner, and they declared that 100 of them had been placed in front of the British, and were compelled to act as cover by officers, who forced them to the front with their revolvers. The sortie on the Boer position failed, and the Kaffirs alleged that they were fired upon by the officers during the retreat.

It was this small encounter which inspired some modest English war correspondent to herald it as "a striking British victory," while a reecho of this newspaper achievement reached Australia and caused the Kangaroo Jingoes to go one very much better with the news of the first English triumph. I find that the Sydney (N.S.W.) "Daily Telegraph" of Saturday, October 21, announced the great and glad tidings as follows: "The Transvaal War.—British Victory at Mafeking!—A Feigned Retreat and a Dashing Sortie!—1,500 Boers Killed!" General Cronje's report of this skirmish told a tale of three Boers killed and of a dozen wounded.

Several offers to storm the town were made in the early days of the siege. The Potchefstroom and Rustenburg commandoes were willing for the task, while the Scandinavian Corps, a body of about 100 Uitlanders of that race, who had joined Cronje's laager, eagerly volunteered to lead any general assault upon the place. No consent, however, would be given to these proposals. General Joubert would lend no countenance to such a plan. Cronje was likewise averse to its adoption. Both erroneously believed that Mafeking, Ladysmith, and Kimberley would be starved or shelled into surrender before enough of troops could arrive from England to secure the relief of the forces penned up in the three besieged places. It also appeared to their judgment as a great moral and political triumph for the little Republics to compel 15,000 or 20,000 British and Colonial troops to seek shelter from Boer commandoes within three British towns.

On the 31st of October it was decided to attack a strong posi-

BOER "LONG TOM" OUTSIDE OF MAFEKING

tion held by Baden-Powell, at a spot called Cannon Kopje, and a number of Potchefstroom men volunteered for the work. There was absolutely no cover of any kind between the Boer lines and this part of the British defensive outworks. The attack was planned as a surprise in the early hours of the morning, but it was the Boers who were themselves surprised. The English were well on the alert, and allowed their foes to approach near their position before using their guns. The men of Cronje's own commando were shot back with Maxim and rifle fire, and would have lost very heavily in the rash attempt they had made had the British fire not been so badly directed. The casualties were only 4 killed and some 20 wounded.

A counter attack of a most determined character was made a few weeks later by Baden-Powell upon General Snyman. This Boer officer had replaced General Cronje in the command of the investing burghers when the latter was appointed by the Federal Governments to the head command of the forces which were to bar Lord Methuen's advance to the relief of Kimberley. Snyman was left with 2,500 Boers to carry on the shortsighted plan of wasting time and men in front of this small place. He and Baden-Powell, in their tactics during continuance of the siege, resembled a pair of pugilists, fencing and ducking, retiring and advancing in a ring; scientifically up in the tricks of the "noble art," but bent more upon an exhibition of skill for an applauding gallery than upon serious business. In this style of carrying on war, it must be frankly admitted that the Marico Commandant was no match for his histrionic British adversary.

Once in December (appropriately enough on Boxing Day) Baden-Powell planned and attempted a real attack upon Snyman, and the result, as reported to the Executive at Pretoria, was disastrous to the assailants. The Boer general's account of the affair reads :

"This morning the enemy offered a desperate assault upon one of our forts. They made a combined attack with cannon, Maxim, and musketry, and they had an armored train to their rear. They charged us with such violence that some of them were shot dead right upon the side of our fort, and with God's help we retained our position and our fort. We are also in complete possession of the battle-field. The number of English dead is 55, which does not include the various human freights they previously carried home in their armored train and in their ambulance wagons.

"The loss of the British was so severe that our burghers had to assist them in hoisting their dead and wounded into their vehicles, assistance which they most thankfully acknowledged.

"Our casualties are one killed, two men seriously wounded,

and six slightly. The burghers fought most courageously. We also made three Britishers prisoners of war."

In a later report General Snyman remarks that the cartridges taken from the enemy during the morning's battle were Dum-Dum (Mark IV.) bullets.

In a subsequent despatch the Boer general said that "the enemy's official admissions show a loss of 108 dead and wounded." Along with this message to Pretoria, Snyman sent the following communication which he had received from Colonel Baden-Powell:

"Mafeking, 27th December, 1899.

"To General Snyman, before Mafeking.

"Sir—I wish to express my thanks to those of your burghers who lent kindly assistance yesterday in carrying our dead and wounded from the battle-field. Their friendly offices are most highly valued by the comrades of the fallen.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"BADEN-POWELL,

"Colonel Commanding H. M.'s Troops at Mafeking."

In the "Volksstem" of Pretoria and the "Standard and Diggers' News" of Johannesburg the names and addresses of the killed and wounded on the Boer side in the attack on the Platboomfort on the 26th of December were printed, and the list consisted of 1 killed and 10 wounded, only.

KIMBERLEY

The Federal Governments attached an importance to Kimberley, both politically and strategically, which Mafeking did not possess. The Diamond City stood for Rhodes and Co., and Rhodes and Co. were the primary authors of the war, in having been the plotters and organizers of the Jameson Raid, of which the conflict that commenced on the 11th of October, 1899, was a direct sequence and result. Kimberley, therefore, was a factor in the situation which appealed more strongly to Dutch feeling than did either Ladysmith or Mafeking. It was near the point of junction between the British and Free State territories, and would be a menacing quantity on the right flank of such Federal force as would have to contest the way of the enemy's advance on Bloemfontein. Cecil Rhodes, too, when hostilities were declared, had rushed to where his immense interests were centered and imperiled, and, calm and passionless as the Boers have shown themselves to be in every emergency throughout the whole campaign, there was no disguising

their bitter feeling against their arch-enemy in the early days of the war, and the eagerness of their wish to lay hands upon him.

Notwithstanding these urgent reasons for the capture of Kimberley, the operations directed to that end were of a forcibly feeble character from the beginning. There was not alone an inefficient military direction, but a divided one as well; several Free State Commandants being in charge of the commandoes in front and to the south of the Diamond City, each very jealous of every other's power and authority. Mr. C. J. Wessels, member of the Free State Volksraad, was made Commandant-in-Chief of the western forces, with Mr. Jacob Prinsloo, another M.V., in charge of the burghers who were to defend the dangerous position north of the Orange River Station, from whence the main British force was expected to advance either on Kimberley or Bloemfontein. Had Commandants Andries Cronje, of Winburg, and Christian De Wet (both also Free State M.V.'s) been sent to the west in the first instance, instead of Wessels and Prinsloo, Mr. Cecil Rhodes would have passed most of his time during the war in Pretoria as a prisoner. De Wet's natural military talent would have told him that the one way in which to insure the fall of Kimberley was first to secure the capture of the British position and stores at De Aar, and that the surest way in which to lose both places was to pay more attention to the Diamond City than to the key of the whole western military situation. Wessels and Prinsloo, however, were members of the Free State Kriegs Committee, and this fact doubtless explains their appointment.

The number of men in Wessels' commandoes was too small for a vigorous investment of Kimberley, and no effective move was made before the 5th of November to subject the town to a regular siege. General De la Rey had been detached from the forces in front of Mafeking with 1,500 burghers with which to reenforce the commandoes further south on the Bechuanaland border. On his way to Kimberley he crossed into British territory, and captured the important town of Vryburg; considerately allowing the Colonial magistrates and police to retire from the place without molestation. The day after joining forces with Wessels, he succeeded in destroying a formidable mine north of Kimberley, which had been carefully prepared so as to invite a belief that it was a neglected ammunition depot, instead of a mine of 200 cases of dynamite and 100 of nitro-glycerine. Electric wires connected the building with the town, but De la Rey's foresight averted the blow which had been so deliberately planned, by standing off at a safe distance with his guns and then blowing the place and the explosives into the air.

There had been one or two encounters between small bodies of both forces before the arrival of De la Rey, in one of which a patrol under Field Cornet Botha (of Boshof) engaged an armored train on the south side of Kimberley. A week before this event a train from Cape Town was allowed to pass on its way, owing to the fact that some ladies were seen to be aboard. Commandant Du Plessis, who was at the time in charge of the small force holding the line at Belmont, would not consent to have the train fired upon, nor even searched. There was no acknowledgment on Colonel Kekewich's part of this considerate act of courtesy and forbearance. The mine of nitro-glycerine and dynamite on the line of the Boer positions north of the town was the retort courteous of the British defenders of Kimberley.

The engagement with the armored train at Mackfarlane's Siding on the 25th of October was undecisive. The train and its occupants, estimated at 400 troops with four guns, steamed back to Kimberley after a two hours' contest with the burgher patrol under Field Cornet Botha. This brave officer and 5 of his men were killed, while 6 more were wounded. The number of English casualties was not known in the Boer lines.

The combatants within Kimberley were estimated at 4,000; comprising 500 or 600 regular troops, including men of the Royal Engineers, and about 2,500 Volunteers, with companies of Cape Police, local forces, and mounted infantry. Colonel Kekewich, an experienced officer, was in chief command, and had a battery and a half of field guns, and ten Maxims.

The mounds of "tailings" thrown up in the course of diamond mining were admirable ready-made forts, on which guns and riflemen secured the best possible protection, and rendered the town unapproachable except to a formidable force prepared to sell many lives for the chances of a fortunate assault. These heaps of tailings were likewise an effective shield against Boer shells to many of the enemy's otherwise vulnerable positions within the city. There was, therefore, as much of calculated confidence as of Jingo boasting in Mr. Cecil Rhodes' celebrated message, that he was as safe in Kimberley as if he were in Piccadilly, while he believed General Buller would be in Pretoria by Christmas.

The Orange River is crossed by a splendid bridge, a little to the west of the junction of the Orange Free State with Cape Colony, and the country from thence north to Kimberley, a distance of about 90 miles, is typical of South African scenery. The railway line follows a course of least climbing, and winds in and out between occasional kopjes and ridges, on each hand, in its progress north. These hills generally rise up from the veldt

BOER CONVALESCENTS LEAVING KIMBERLEY, NOVEMBER, 1900

without the connecting "neks" with other elevations, which are a marked feature of the mountainous districts of Natal, and do not, therefore, offer positions quite as advantageous for Boer defensive fighting as those of the eastern British colony. It was along this line of country that the English army was to move, and the kopjes referred to offered the only positions from which a greatly inferior force could hope to contest successfully the way.

The stations on the line after the railway crosses the bridge are Witte Putts, Belmont, Graspan, Honeynest Kloof, Modder River, Merton, Spytfontein, Wimbledon, Kimberley; roughly averaging a dozen miles from each other. Magersfontein is situated between Modder River and Spytfontein a little to the east of the railway line. The Free State border lies parallel with the Griqualand West territory, through which the railway runs, and is seldom more than a few miles away from the line the whole of the distance from Orange River Bridge to the Diamond City. There is neither river nor mountain barrier between the Boer and British countries from the Orange River to Mafeking.

The British base for the relief of Kimberley was De Aar, some 70 miles south of the Orange River, and the Free State main laager was at Jacobsdal, on the Reit River, near its junction with the Modder. The advanced posts of both forces were on the south and north side of the Orange River, respectively.

As already pointed out, the failure of the Free State Government to order a dash upon De Aar, and the capture of the Orange River Bridge after war had been declared, were mainly due to the existence of a Bond Ministry at the Cape. These Ministers were the loyal subjects of England, and the racial friends of the Boer Republics. The British showed no consideration whatever for the difficulties of the Schreiner Cabinet in this embarrassing relationship, except to distrust them, and the Boers ought to have equally disregarded the racial ties, and to have dealt with the Cape as England did. This view, however, found no favor with President Steyn and his Government. They had their own peculiar, and too considerate, ideas of the obligations which their kinship with the Afrikander Bond placed upon their actions in the war, and, rather than cause trouble to the Cape Ministry in their relations with the British, the latter were allowed to save De Aar and to secure the passage over the Orange River. The capture of both places by the Boers in October would have insured the fall of Kimberley, and all which that would have meant in the fortunes of the Federal campaign from November to May.

On the 10th of November a Free State commando, 350 strong, in occupation of Belmont, was attacked by some 700 Lancers and

mounted infantry, a little to the west of the village. The Boer officer in command was Field Cornet Van der Merwe, of Prinsloo's command, and his only artillery consisted of a single Krupp gun. The British were under the orders of Colonel Gough, and had a battery of field artillery. Van der Merwe took up position on a hill called Kaffir Kop, a few miles west of Belmont, dividing his small force into two parties, and awaited the attack of the enemy. The Boer gun put itself out of action after the third shot had been fired, and the fight which followed was continued by the Free Staters with their Mausers only. The tactics of the enemy neutralized the loss of the service of the Krupp, as the British officer sent his mounted men within 600 yards of the hill held by Van der Merwe, and thus gave the burghers, who were posted on the point nearest the advancing troopers, a target for rifle practice, and soon a score of saddles were emptied. The encounter continued for three hours, the enemy foolishly prancing round the Boer position, losing men in pursuit of this riding exercise, and showing no inclination to come to closer quarters. A fight between twelve of the Fauresmith burghers and a troop of mounted infantry, to the right of the Boer position, ended the day's engagement. The dozen Boers were cut off from their main body, who were away a couple of miles to the left, but so steady was their stand and so straight was their shooting that they held off over 150 of their assailants until the English retreat was sounded. Van der Merwe had only two men wounded in the action, and a dozen horses shot. The British losses were not known to the Boer officer, but the estimated casualties were 50.

The fight on the 10th was but a preliminary to a formidable British advance, and steps were taken by the Federal Governments to make preparations more adequate to the task of keeping back the force which was now ready to spring forward from the Orange River to the succor of Kimberley. It was resolved to transfer General Piet Cronje from the lines before Mafeking to the southwest, in order that he might assume command as fighting general of the forces with which Methuen was to be encountered. The intention of the two Governments had been to give Cronje the task of meeting Buller in case the English generalissimo, then at sea, was to lead an army by Norvals Pont to Bloemfontein, and to delegate to De la Rey the duty of barring Methuen's march on Kimberley. When, however, it was found that British feeling and prestige demanded Buller's first attention in the plan of relieving Ladysmith, Cronje was entrusted with the operations south of Kimberley. Unfortunately, however, he did not reach Jacobsdal until after the battle of Enslin was fought on the 25th of November, the results of which fight and that of Belmont only emphasized the imperative necessity

there was for relieving Jacob Prinsloo from the command of the most important section of the Free State forces.

Previous to the first battle fought by Methuen in his efforts to reach Kimberley, the Free State generals, Wessels, Du Toit, and Ferreira, with De la Rey as fighting general, had continuously bombarded the Diamond City since the arrival of the Transvaal contingent as a reenforcement. There was, however, no effective unity of action between the generals, and, beyond holding their positions which were occasionally attacked in sorties and surprises by the English garrison, and in shelling the town in return, there was neither serious loss inflicted nor sustained by either side around Kimberley during November.

Chapter XVII

BATTLE OF BELMONT

BLUNDERING OF PRINSLOO—DE LA REY JOINS HIM TO BAR METHUEN'S ADVANCE TO KIMBERLEY—METHUEN'S ATTACK—PRINSLOO'S INEXCUSABLE WITHDRAWAL GIVES BRITISH NOMINAL VICTORY—DE LA REY'S REPORT OF BATTLE—PRINSLOO'S REPORT—BRITISH SHOOT SURRENDERED BOERS UNDER FALSE CHARGE OF MISUSE OF WHITE FLAG.

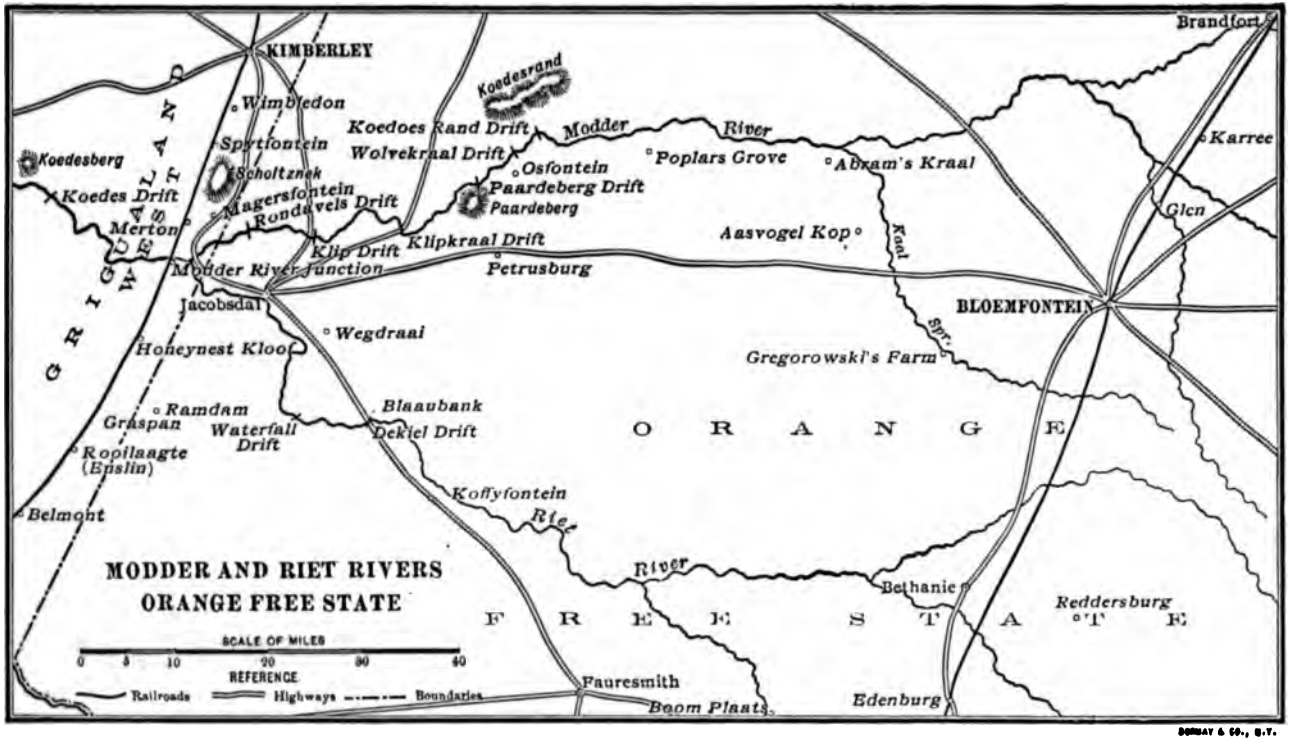
PRINSLOO, with 1,500 men, moved south from Jacobsdal to join Van der Merwe near Belmont on the 20th of November. De la Rey was to follow with 800 Transvaalers, who were detached from the forces in front of Kimberley to reenforce Prinsloo's column, but, owing to the blundering of Prinsloo on the one hand, and the rapid advance of Methuen from the Orange River, De la Rey had no part in arranging the plan of operations for the fight which came off on the 23rd.

The Free State generals knew in advance what were the plans of Lord Methuen, and the extent of his men and guns; facts relating to all these matters having been duly published in the Jingo papers at Cape Town for everybody's information. It was, unfortunately, valuable information all but disregarded, as no better provision had been made with which to meet 10,000 British veterans than what has been related. Wessels, who was in chief command of the whole forces operating before and south of Kimberley, had no more men at his disposal than he deemed sufficient to watch Cecil Rhodes and his protectors, and the commando which went south with Prinsloo to meet Methuen was absurdly weak in guns and men for the task. De la Rey was subsequently allowed to join Prinsloo, and the two columns, with a united force of some 2,500 men and four guns, comprised the strength of the Boer army which was to bar Methuen's advance until Cronje should arrive with additional burghers from the north.

On Wednesday, November 22, the Free State general received information from his scouts that the British were to attack him on the following morning. His positions were spread along a series of small kopjes, to the right and left of the Kimberley line, extending over an area of several miles, and offering cover

for his men. Lord Methuen, in his lengthy report of this engagement, dignifies these veldt ridges with the name of "mountain." These kopjes were almost all detached, and were, with their small bodies of defending burghers, tempting incitations to frontal attacks on the part of the officers who were to carry out Lord Methuen's elaborately arranged plan of attack. Prinsloo held the center of his positions behind the village to the right, with the Fauresmith commando, one Krupp, and one Maxim-Nordenfelt. De la Rey and his Transvaalers were further behind, on a hill between Belmont and Ramdam, with a single Krupp. Commandant Lubbe, with the Jacobsdal men, was west of De la Rey with a Maxim-Nordenfelt. Van der Merwe, who fought the skirmish with Methuen's patrol on the 10th, occupied Kaffir Kopje, on the extreme west of the line, with the Middenvelder and Groot River burghers. The entire Boer artillery consisted of two seven-pound Krupp guns and two Maxim-Nordenfelts.

The British began the battle shortly after daylight with a furious cannonade of all the Boer positions. They had twelve or fifteen guns, some of them throwing lyddite shells. With the support of these batteries, Methuen attempted to storm the center and right of the Boer positions simultaneously, and to turn the left by a body of Lancers and mounted infantry, which was to swing round on Prinsloo's rear, and capture his camp and baggage. His forces included the Grenadier, Coldstream, and Scots Guards, Northumberland, Yorkshire, and Lancashire Regiments, and a brigade of marines and seamen gunners, with Lancer and other mounted troops. The battle lasted from four in the morning until two in the afternoon, with the advantage decidedly on the side of the Boers until their general in a moment of weakness gave up the fight and retired from the field. Prinsloo's extraordinary action has been described in harsher words by warmer friends, who blame him exclusively for the loss of the battle. The Fauresmith burghers had fought splendidly during the day, having several times shot back bodies of British who attempted to take their kopje, while all the other Boer positions had been held by an equal courage and tenacity. The enemy had suffered terribly in officers and in men, when, influenced by a fear that he was exposing his small force to too great loss in an unequal contest, and unaware of the actual condition of the combat in other parts of the field, and of De la Rey's and Lubbe's successful fighting, Prinsloo ordered a retreat of his center, and thus gave the victory to Methuen. Commandant Lubbe and General De la Rey succeeded in holding back those of the enemy who pursued Prinsloo, and De la Rey's men then easily shot their way through the Lancers who had attempted to get north of


MODDER AND RIET RIVERS
ORANGE FREE STATE
KIMBERLEY
Brandfort
Wimbledon
Koedesrand
Koedoes Rand Drift
Modder
River
Karree
Koedesberg
Spytfontein
Wolvekraal Drift
Poplars Grove
Abram's Kraal
Scholtznek
Osfontein
Koedes Drift
Magersfontein
Paardeberg Drift
Paardeberg
Glen
Merton
Rondavels Drift
Aasvogel Kop
Kaal
Klip Drift
Klipkraal Drift
Modder River Junction
Petrusburg
Jacobsdal
BLOEMFONTEIN
Spr.
Wegdraai
Honeynest Kloo
Gregorowski's Farm
Ramdam
Blaaubank
Graspan
Waterfall Drift
Dekiel Drift
O R A N G E
Roopilaagte (Enslin)
Koffyfontein
Belmont
Riet
River
Bethanie
Reddersburg
F R E E S T A T E
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
Fauresmith
Boom Plaats
Edenburg
GRIQUALAND WEST

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the kopje which the Transvaal burghers had successfully held all the morning. The Boer forces fell back with their guns and equipments, in perfect order, towards Graspan and Ramdam, and Methuen was left in possession of the field. He made no attempt at a pursuit. He was satisfied with the name of a victory which he had not really won.

The highly rhetorical report of the battle written by the English general was an anticipation, in style and sentiment, of that other report which in a few days' time was to startle the military world by its extravagance of expression and comparison. In this report of the Belmont fight he says: "I have accounted for 83 killed, and have 23 wounded in my hospital, and as their wounded were carried away I may assume their losses were heavier than mine." It is not clear to which army Lord Methuen refers in this ambiguous sentence. He was in possession of the field of battle, and had, presumably, both British and Boer killed under the care of his ambulance; yet there are no particulars given in the report from which I quote of the number of his own casualties. The Natal "Mercury" of the 25th of November published a Reuter's despatch from Belmont, giving the total British losses in Thursday's fight at 227, which number included 58 killed, 151 wounded, and 18 missing.

General De la Rey's official report of the same battle was as follows:

"The enemy attacked us this morning from two sides, and we succeeded in keeping them back until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when large masses of infantry had reached a point near my commando in the same hill where I was situated, and which was occupied by men under Commandant Lubbe.

"The burghers defended themselves at this point with great determination, but ten of our men were killed and a few severely wounded. Those who were slightly wounded succeeded in escaping.

"We were completely surrounded. The English troops then spread out for a distance of two and a half hours' journey, and we were compelled to retire.

"At the point where we had to pass on our way out the Lancers were stationed, and we were compelled to drive them away. Many of our horses are killed and wounded. Commandant Lubbe is slightly wounded, but not before the enemy had suffered very heavily from his men.

"The overwhelming force of the enemy was too great for our small force, and after a brave stand, which lasted till the afternoon, we were compelled to take up other positions, and we are now at the (east) side of the railway.

"General Cronje is hastening to our help. Cannot give the

actual numbers of the killed and wounded on our side, but the loss is not great.

"The enemy had six cannon, while we had only one."

This report deals only with the operations of the Boer left, which was composed of 800 Transvaalers under De la Rey, and some 250 Free Staters under Commandant Lubbe, and the reference by De la Rey to the number of guns on both sides relates only to his own burghers, and to the English troops who were opposed to himself and Lubbe in their part of the field.

General Prinsloo sent his own report of the battle to Bloemfontein. It is a singular document, and shows the helpless incapacity of the officer, through whose timidity and want of judgment a battle virtually won was turned over to the enemy as a relinquished victory. Poor old Jacobus actually believed that his English opponent was none other than General Buller, while he had heard that the Boer general who was actually fighting all day at the left of his own lines was "in the vicinity of" the battle-field during the engagement!

"November 23rd.—This morning there was a terrible fight to our disadvantage, as we had to leave the field.

"According to a report by Dr. Voortman, who went over the field of battle, we lost about 12 killed and 40 wounded, but the names are not known yet.

"The engagement lasted from daybreak to about midday, and, by reason of the large number of big guns of the enemy, it was impossible for our center to retain its position.

"The loss of the enemy must be enormous. Some of the Indian troops were shot down at six yards by our burghers. Their cannon were all shot back, and the draft cattle of other cannons were killed. The number of the enemy is very difficult to estimate, but it was an overwhelming force. Our burghers were compelled to retreat in the direction of Ramdam. Fighting General De la Rey is in the vicinity. According to trustworthy information, General Redvers Buller is personally in command. Commandant Serfontein is a prisoner of war, as he would not leave his wounded son. Ten of our wounded are in good care with the enemy. The burghers have in no wise lost courage."

De la Rey's losses would not be more than those mentioned in Prinsloo's report, and, as there were some 20 burghers taken prisoner in the retreat of the center, the total Boer casualties at Belmont would thus number about 22 killed, 80 wounded, and 20 missing.

The effect on the minds of the burghers of Prinsloo's unfortunate action at this battle was demoralizing, and no such stand as

that at Enslin would have been made again so soon after Belmont were it not for the knowledge that Cronje was hastening to their aid, and that De la Rey was with them. Prinsloo, who was a thoroughly honest, patriotic, and well-meaning man, recognized his own unfitness for the post of Vecht General, and asked President Steyn to relieve him of his command; a request which was not, unfortunately, acceded to until after the battle of Modder River.

Lord Methuen's unsoldierly imputations upon the conduct of his foes at Belmont were only worthy of that eminent man and general. The facts upon which he based his charge of firing under cover of the white flag were these: Near the end of the battle, and as the Boer forces were retreating, but firing as they retired, a small body of about fifteen Boers, who had been isolated on a detached kopje, were surrounded by troops, and were being fired upon from all sides. Retreat was hopeless, and one of the party held up a white flag. This man, according to the Boer version of the story, was in the rear of his comrades, on a higher ground, and acted on his own initiative, seeing the hopelessness of the position. The English ceased firing, but the Boers lower down on the ridge who had not seen the flag, nor knew of its being hoisted, continued the fight. Some of the enemy were hit, and the British, in retaliation, shot every member of the small band, riddling their bodies with bullets. It was on this incident that Lord Methuen grounded a foul charge, and leveled it against all the men who had fought against him at Belmont. It was a charge made with the object of rendering it a cover for the massacre of the fifteen burghers, and was thoroughly English in meaning and motive.

Chapter XVIII

BATTLES OF ROOILAAGTE (ENSLIN) AND MODDER RIVER

BOERS FALL BACK ON ROOILAAGTE—DE LA REY ASSUMES REAL COMMAND—BOERS REPULSE CHARGE OF NAVAL BRIGADE—CONTRAST BETWEEN BRITISH AND BOER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS—CRONJE JOINS DE LA REY—SKETCH OF GENERAL CRONJE—BOER POSITION AT MODDER RIVER—REPULSE OF BRITISH GUARDSMEN—INEFFECTIVENESS OF BRITISH ARTILLERY—PRINSLOO'S RETREAT CAUSES LOSS OF BATTLE—DE LA REY'S REPORT—BRITISH BAYONET WOUNDED BOERS—REPORT OF DR. LEVER ON BRITISH ABUSE OF RED CROSS SERVICE—LONDON "GLOBE'S" COMPARISON OF BRITISH LOOTING WITH BOER DISCIPLINE.

AFTER the engagement at Belmont on Thursday the Federals fell back eight miles along the Kimberley line. The physical features of the country at Rooilaagte resemble those around the theater of the fight on the 23rd; a dry sandy veldt or plain, broken at intervals by kopjes, stretching in detached positions from west to east; the railway seeking the easiest gradient round such hills as are met on its pathway towards the Diamond City. The kopjes slope upward in a graduated rise from the veldt, and while offering good positions for defensive purposes they were easily accessible, in the structure of their formation, to any large force advancing upon them under the protection of a sufficient artillery support.

General Prinsloo was still nominally in command, but De la Rey assumed control of the allied burghers, and took up position at Rooilaagte, north of Graspan, between two kopjes which commanded the railway. The hill to the east, or left, of his position was the better ground for meeting the assault of the enemy, and he placed his Transvaalers there with a Krupp and pom-pom. Further east, near Ramdam, a body of 500 burghers, including the Jacobsdal commando, under Commandant Lubbe, were to await the development of a probable movement by the enemy in that direction. Away to the right, beyond the railway, the remaining Free State burghers, under Prinsloo, were placed in detached bodies on the line of kopjes stretching west and south in the direction of Graspan. They were the same men who had fought at Belmont.

At Rooilaagte, De la Rey anticipated Methuen's Belmont plan,

and ably compelled the English general to deliver his main attack upon the hill held by the Transvaalers. The enemy advanced early on Saturday morning (the 25th), and began the battle by guns from an armored train, and by batteries which deluged the kopje in possession of the Transvaalers with shrapnel and lyddite. The hill was literally swept by the enemy's guns on the south side, but this had been fully expected, and it was the rocks and not the Boers that suffered from the hail of shells. The burghers had made good use of their time during Friday, and were well protected behind their strong stone sangars from the shells which English war correspondents were laboriously endowing with a killing or wounding power of some twenty Boers per shell. The rate was not too liberal if the Boers had only carelessly lent themselves as targets for the purposes of the calculation. They chose not to do so, however, and I am only stating what has been the universal testimony of Boer officers who fought Methuen's forces from Belmont to Magersfontein, that not fifty of the Federals who were killed and wounded in the four battles which ended in the crushing defeat of the advancing British, owed their disablement to the work of the English artillery. During the play of Methuen's batteries upon a kopje held by the Transvaal men, a strong mounted force had been sent round to the east to menace the Boer left at Ramdam. De la Rey, however, had fully expected this, and Lubbe and Ventner had already commenced a counter turning movement with their 500 burghers, which was to shield the Boer center in this way. These men were splendidly mounted, and acted as if their objective was to work round Methuen's right in a counter attack upon his camp at Belmont. The maneuver produced its intended effect, as the English column made no further effort to reach Ramdam.

Meanwhile a similar movement had been made by Methuen against Prinsloo at the extreme west position. Here the two forces confronted each other, and maintained during the battle a rifle and artillery contest, neither side gaining any appreciable advantage.

The chief encounter of the day took place at the position held by De la Rey and his Transvaalers. The English general had made his most determined artillery onslaught there, and, persuaded that no force subjected to such a tremendous fire could retain their morale sufficiently to meet a frontal infantry attack, he ordered his naval brigade to face and carry the hill.

The Guards, who had made a similar frontal attack at Belmont, and paid for the reckless encounter in 150 of their men, were kept in the rear at Enslin. The work of carrying De la Rey's position

was given to the Naval Brigade. These seamen were most stupidly led. They were actually sent forward in more or less close formation to charge an unknown number of men entrenched on a hill! There can be no denying the bravery shown by these marines in thus attempting to storm the kopje. They were, however, received with a withering volley from the Transvaal men, who had reserved their fire until the advancing marines almost reached the foot of the hill. Over 100 of them were shot down, and the assault was arrested.

In the meantime the reenforcements which De la Rey had expected from Jacobsdal had not arrived, and, as Methuen was ordering up his reserves to support the attack on the hill, the Boer general fell back, taking his few guns with him, being allowed to retire by the enemy without any attempt at pursuit. As at Talana Hill, the force which had been shot back in its attempt to take the Transvaalers' position found no Boers on the kopje after having paid so dear a price for the fruitless glory of its capture.

Methuen's loss in this battle was about 210 killed, wounded, and missing.

I have been unable to obtain the Boer returns of their casualties at this fight. It was believed, however, that the loss was not even as heavy as at Belmont. The two forces in this fight were in the following relative strength: Methuen had 10,000 men and three batteries of artillery; De la Rey's and Prinsloo's united commandoes numbered some 2,500 burghers, with four guns only.

Lord Methuen repeated after the fight at Enslin the same slanders upon his plucky foes which he embodied in his report of the battle of Belmont. To use such expressions as "dastardly conduct" towards an enemy on the battle-field, without due inquiry into the facts on which the charge is made to rest, is thoroughly English in its ignorance of the canons of elementary justice, and typical of what Englishmen call their sense of fair play. It is absolutely untrue that any fire was opened upon the British ambulance at Enslin. Such charges were repeated at subsequent battles only to be refuted by the evidence of true facts, and they are as untrue in their allegations against the burghers who fought Methuen as against the Boers who campaigned against Buller on the Tugela. In all their larger engagements the English were in the habit of bringing their ambulance wagons near the zone of fire, and it was not possible for men of the Boer artillery, 4,000 or 5,000 yards away, to distinguish the Red Cross ensign on vehicles, and to differentiate between them and the enemy's ammunition or other wagons, at such a distance. The fault in the instance where the ambulance may have been under fire was that of those who brought

such wagons where they ought not to be, and not that of the Boers, who never intruded their ambulance carts upon any section of the battle-field until after an engagement.

In this, as in so many more instances in this war, an English charge against the Boers was a counter allegation to an undeniable fact which reflected the utmost disgrace, not upon Lord Methuen, but on those in charge of his transport arrangements, and upon English colonists from De Aar to Cape Town. Twenty of Prinsloo's wounded and about as many prisoners fell into the hands of the British at Belmont, and were forwarded to Cape Town along with wounded Guardsmen. They traveled in the same train, but, while the English had the protection of covered carriages during the journey under a burning Karoo sun by day and the peculiar cold of the early South African summer by night, the Boer prisoners, including the wounded, were placed in open trucks, and without any covering of any kind! The men made no complaint. They took off their coats and made pillows of them, and for two days and nights traveled in this manner, and on the coarsest food, to their destination. This, however, was not the most reprehensible part of the conduct of their enemies. At all the railway stations, including Cape Town, the Cape Kaffirs and the no less unmanly British crowded to the trucks containing the Boer wounded and prisoners, and jeered and hooted as only people dead to every sense of chivalry could behave. Probably no lower species of civilized humanity could be found in the wide domain of the British Empire than in Cape Town during the war; the refugees from Johannesburg being added to the ordinary scum of the city, and the task of insulting the men whom they dare not meet in the open field was appropriately performed by this cowardly canaille. It is a testimony to the honor of the Boers at Pretoria willingly borne by British prisoners, that neither by act nor word was any insult of any kind given to the thousands of English prisoners who were forwarded to the Transvaal capital from October to May. The conduct of President Kruger, in standing bareheaded while British prisoners were being marched to their location past his residence, was typical of the spirit and the manner in which the Boer people treated their captured foes.

The second contest with Methuen ended in his possession of the battle-field as at Belmont, and in the retreat of the Boer commandoes. Progress was being made towards Kimberley, but a terrible toll was being exacted at each contested stage of the journey, and the further the English general advanced the weaker became his power to successfully fight his way through. Reenforcements were constantly arriving, and the distance to Methuen's objective

was decreasing, it is true; but on that Saturday afternoon, when De la Rey retired slowly and sullenly from Rooilaagte towards the Modder River, a cloud of dust was seen on the horizon to the north-east, in the direction of Jacobsdal, and news soon spread through the British lines that General Cronje had joined hands with the forces which had made so gallant a stand for nine hours that day against great odds in men and guns. It was the advance patrol of his little column only, but the old Lion of Potchefstroom was close behind, and, tho he was too late for Belmont and Enslin, he would be in good time for Modder River and Magersfontein.

A man five feet eight in height, vigorously built, dressed in a dark brown suit and hard bowler hat—such as a skilled mechanic might wear—with a dark, bronzed face of stern character, having a slight beard and full mustache, grayish with years, under a fine nose and dark, penetrating eyes; a slight stoop in the rounded brawny shoulders, and the head thrown forward, at the age of sixty-three, with a virile figure which might pass for that of a man of fifty years—a strong, fiercely-earnest, stubborn man, with absolute confidence in himself, and a relentless tenacity of purpose stamped upon every line of form and feature—this was the general who, covered with dust and riding with 500 burghers, reached the north bank of the Modder River the Monday following the battle of Enslin, and placed himself at the head of the Boer forces which had fallen back before Methuen's army after two sanguinary fights.

General Piet Cronje had traveled almost continuously from Mafeking since being summoned by the Federal Governments to take charge of the operations against Methuen's advance. He had "looked in" at the siege of Kimberley en route, and had compelled a more vigorous investment of the town, a circumstance which prevented his reaching De la Rey on Saturday, as had been expected.

GENERAL CRONJE

General Cronje was born at Potchefstroom, the old capital of the Transvaal Republic. He was descended, like De la Rey, from French ancestors, and possessed, like him, a strong trace of his racial origin in an easy, natural courtesy of manner in ordinary conversation. There could not well be in one individual a greater contrast than between the Cronje in the relations of social intercourse and the Cronje of the laager and kriegsraad. One was gentle, polite, and agreeable, considerate of another's views and prejudices; well-informed, pleasant, and obliging. In the camp, however, this polite and genial French Boer disappeared, and his place

was taken by a silent, taciturn, determined man, who would listen without a word to the debate in the Council of War, or to the expression of individual opinion on the part of officer or friend, and, without deigning to consider a single argument or reason put forward by others, would deliver his view in sharp, arbitrary tones, and end the discussion. Any contradiction or opposition, no matter by whom, would extort the remark, with a proud, peremptory glance, "Am I the General, or you?" and the opposition became dumb. When commanding in battle his voice was loud and harsh as he thundered out his orders in sharp, imperative tones, and rode from one position to another in restless, watchful energy, directing everything and everybody, utterly regardless of bursting shrapnel or flying bullets, as if possessed of a charmed life, immune against danger or disaster.

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GENERAL P. A. CRONJE

Cronje, unlike other Boer generals, had studied military works, and was an educated soldier, in addition to being an extensive farmer and, in later years, Native Commissioner under the Transvaal Republic. Like President Kruger and Christian De Wet, he had no faith in English promises, conventions, pledges, or character. He knew the race thoroughly, and was, of course, conversant with all the crookedness which had marked the relations, political, diplomatic, and military, of England with South Africa from the jugglery with which the Cape was made a British Colony down to the knavery of the Jameson Raid. He had always been convinced, since the mines of the Rand were discovered and British capital began to entrench itself there, that the old predatory disposition of the English nation, which had deliberately violated the Sand River Treaty, and the Aliwal North Treaty over the diamond mines of Kimberley, would act in the same spirit towards the London Convention in order to annex the country of the Witwatersrand gold mines. The war was therefore no surprise to him.

He had gained considerable military experience in the service of the Transvaal. He organized the burghers of his native district in 1880, and fought a determined struggle with the British garri-

son at Potchefstroom, vigorously pushing the siege, and not permitting an armistice agreed upon at Pretoria to stand between his burghers and the surrender of their foes. He fought his adversaries into submission, and in so doing earned the long-memoried hatred of the British. He it was, too, who at Doornkop had disposed of Jameson and his force so effectively and with such small loss on the Boer side, and retrieved, in the leniency of his terms to the surrendered Raiders, the arbitrariness of his treatment of the garrison of Potchefstroom.

In religion Cronje is a strong Calvinist, and might be truly called a convinced Fatalist in the intensity of his belief in the preordained destinies of men. He had a deep, sincere, religious conviction that he owed his many remarkable escapes from death when hunting and on many a battle-field to the special protective care of Providence, and was in the habit of saying that no English bullet would ever end his career. Standing one day in the graveyard of Potchefstroom, in 1880, during a contest with the British forces, a shell burst at his feet, killing the horse which he held by the bridle and that of a burgher named Labuscagne, who stood by his side; both men escaping without a scratch. Labuscagne became Cronje's mascot companion afterwards, and was by his side in every emergency, fighting or hunting, from that time until both surrendered to Lord Roberts at Paardeberg.

During the whole of his campaign, from the commencement of the siege of Mafeking to the date of his surrender, a religious service was conducted every day in his laager; and in case the predicant was absent the general himself offered up prayers.

Such was the man who looked across the Modder River on Monday, November 27, at the foe whom he was destined to send reeling back from the most disastrous field of battle from which a British army had been driven in modern times.

A uniform English criticism of Boer fighting has been that their stand was always made on fortified hills, and never on level ground, while even when successful in holding such positions they never, or seldom ever, pursued their foes after a battle. These are statements containing a little of what is true, so as to make them more plausible than if they were groundless allegations. It was the English, both in Natal and on the west border line, who invariably selected the ground of battle in their plans of operations, and both sides made the best possible use of the advantages offered by the natural formation of the area of combat. The implied charge of want of fighting qualities in not following up a British force after a "mishap," purposely omits mention of the fact that, except at Modderspruit and Dundee, the Boers were always in the proportion

of at least one to three or four of their assailants, with guns in similar ratio. Now, 3,000 men, as a fighting unit, may achieve a creditable record in beating back 10,000 opponents, but when one man attempts to pursue three of his enemies he acts as no soldier is reasonably expected to do.

On the Modder River battle-field there were no hills or kopjes. The country north to the river from Rooilaagte is almost a level plain. The veldt south and north slopes gradually down to the sprawling stream, which overflows its ordinary channel in the winter, but is shallow in the summer time. As the English war correspondents could not utilize "semi-impregnable kopjes" in their description of this battle, where they did not exist, they discovered instead "elaborate entrenchments, most cunningly contrived," etc., etc., while they freely gave to General Cronje a force in men and guns almost equal to the English.

The real facts as to the Boer positions and men at the Modder River fight are these: De la Rey, and not Cronje, selected the positions. He had fallen back from Rooilaagte on Saturday evening, after a whole day's fighting. He began his entrenchments on Sunday, and he was attacked at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning. Not a single trench or sangar had been built previously to the Sunday before the fight, and with such tools as the Boers possessed it would be impossible to construct the kind of trenches described by the correspondents within the period between the two engagements.

De la Rey's plans and dispositions were so well conceived that General Cronje made no alteration on his arrival. Prinsloo, being a Free State general, was still in nominal chief command, but he allowed his Transvaal confrères to determine the order of defensive battle and the disposal of the guns. De la Rey placed his Transvaalers in two sections; half opposite the drift across the Modder River in what was destined to become the center of the battle-field, and half eastward of this position, on towards where the Modder falls into the Riet River in its course eastward. Around the hotel and west to the railway bridge (which De la Rey had blown up), the 500 men whom Cronje had brought with him from near Kimberley held the village and the north bank of the river; while extending further west to a bridle drift, about three miles away, the Free Staters, some 1,200 strong, were posted in various groups. The entire Federal forces numbered 3,000, with three Krupps and two automatic Nordenfelts. Major Albrecht had charge of the Krupps in Prinsloo's command, while De la Rey and Cronje had the service of the machine guns, near the railway bridge in the center, which were worked by men of the Transvaal Staats Artillery.

At two points on the south bank of the river, a little to the west of the bridge and to the east of the drift, rifle-pits were dug among the brushwood as part of De la Rey's plan of defense, and in these some of the best shots among the Transvaalers were placed. Sharpshooters also took up position in the trees on the north bank of the stream until the enemy's artillery rendered these posts too hot for the elevated marksmen.

The extreme left of the Boer lines was well protected by the Riet River, which flows up from the south almost at right angles to its sister stream, and thus gave De la Rey a secure position from which to protect the left flank of his center force.

Lord Methuen had been reenforced since the battle of Enslin by two additional Highland regiments, thus raising his effective strength in men to 12,000. His artillery had also been increased by an extra battery, so that the battle at the river began on that early Tuesday morning between two armies, one of which had, in men, fully four to one, and in guns about the same proportion.

The English moved from their camp at Enslin at daybreak, and shortly before seven came in touch with the Free State outposts. These retired on the river, and the battle had begun. The enemy's plans were soon apparent. His artillery opened upon the Boer center at about 5,000 yards, while an entire brigade of troops under General Pole-Carew was sent westward to where Prinsloo's burghers guarded the bridle drift. A body of Guardsmen were wheeled to the right to turn or menace the position which was held by the Transvaal men. Long before these attacking columns had come within range of the Mausers behind the river bank, the artillery of both forces had commenced a furious encounter. The fight over the whole line of four miles was soon in full swing, Mauser and Maxim, Lee-Metford and Krupp, every arm on each side spitting fire and death along the banks of the sluggish river. On the left, where De la Rey and his Transvaalers were posted, the English Guards were held back from the river by a terrific fire which nothing could withstand. They had advanced under cover of the scrub and bushes to within 1,000 yards of the stream, with a battery of guns only another 1,000 yards behind, and so overwhelming was the Boer fire which rained upon the Britishers that they could neither advance nor retire. The Guards' battery was completely silenced by the automatic Boer gun, and its service was shot down in a few seconds. The Guards were compelled to throw themselves on the ground, and to lie there for hours behind stumps of trees and ant-hills or anything which offered a shelter from the merciless hail of bullets which came like a blizzard of lead from where De la Rey coolly directed the action of his men. From eight

to eleven o'clock this state of things continued. The English were driven back along the whole line; the Free Staters on the right sweeping the veldt in front of their positions as completely as the Transvaalers were doing at the center and other extreme. The enemy had suffered terribly in the encounter so far, while very few had been hit on the Boer side—the smokeless powder of the Mauser offering no indication of where the Boer marksmen lay, while Albrecht, Niekerk, Stuckenberg, and the other burgher artillerists had the advantage of protected positions for the few guns which were matched against Methuen's naval and other batteries. The English fire in musketry and guns was wild and mostly ineffective, directed now at one point, now at another, in a chance aim at a supposed location of a gun or a pit of Mauser riflemen. The aiming on the Boer side was at visible objects, and was deliberate and deadly, and by noon on that burning hot day, with the sun scorching the prostrate Guards in front of De la Rey's men, over 300 of the enemy were already *hors de combat* along the south bank of the Modder.

Methuen's sole reliance now was on his artillery, as his efforts to carry any part of the river front held by Cronje or De la Rey by an infantry advance was as futile as would be an attempt to row a boat up Niagara Falls. His naval guns were brought so near the zone of Mauser fire that gunner after gunner was shot down at the service of these weapons, but the enemy persevered despite this loss, and the incessant play of fully twenty field pieces on the positions held by the Boer artillery silenced their guns about two in the afternoon. This, however, in no way checked the burgher riflemen, who continued to pour their steady, ceaseless fire over the river, rendering all attempts at a crossing impossible.

Unfortunately Prinsloo commanded on the extreme right of the Boer lines. His men had fought magnificently during the whole day, easily holding the river against the 9th Brigade of British, commanded by General Pole-Carew. There was nothing wanting in the steadiness and courage which they maintained during a ten hours' superb combat, and no blame for what occurred can rightly be placed upon such gallant fighters as the Fauresmith, Jacobsdal, and other commandoes, who had stood so well against big odds all the previous week. It was once more the result of nerveless leadership.

A portion of Pole-Carew's column had wandered down the river bank away from the brunt of the encounter which had gone on all day between the 9th Brigade and the Free Staters. This body of troops succeeded in turning the Boer right by crossing the stream in face of opposition from a few burghers, and in making a lodg-

A GROUP OF BOER FIGHTERS

ment in and around three or four houses on the north bank. So little did the English generals think of such a simple but obvious movement westward of the Boer right in the earlier part of the day, that the knowledge of this most vital turning action was only obtained by Methuen late in the afternoon, when the battle was almost over. In fact, Pole-Carew's artillery in the rear of the main portion of his own brigade fired upon those troops who had crossed the river, mistaking them for Boers. Prinsloo sent forward about 100 of his men from a position lower down the river to oppose the troops who had crossed. They succeeded in forcing them back to the banks, and held them there for a time with their Mauser fire, but on more troops coming up to the support of those who had gained the north bank, the Free Staters fell back, and Prinsloo retired with them from the field. When Cronje's right had been thus turned, the numerical weakness of his force had to cede to the overwhelming number of his assailants. Prinsloo had again given way, and this movement communicated itself to the whole burgher lines, when a retreat became inevitable. It was an agonizing instance of another battle, actually won by valor and sound generalship, being lost, at the last moment, through the ineptitude of an incompetent officer. Cronje and De la Rey followed in the wake of Prinsloo's Free Staters, there being no pursuit of the slowly retiring commandoes, as they fell back once more with their guns to another position.

General De la Rey's eldest boy, a bright and brave lad of eighteen, was killed by his father's side during the day. The general's report of his own part in the battle was brevity itself. It reads:

"We had a very heavy engagement yesterday, lasting twelve hours.

"I had only about 800 men with me, and there were also approximately 1,000 Free Staters with us.

"We estimated the force of the enemy at, at least, 10,000, and between one and two o'clock in the afternoon they were driven back by the Transvaalers, whom they primarily attacked.

"The English then retired to the west side of the battle-field, where the Free Staters were positioned, and here they were also repulsed several times.

"My dead and wounded number 18, including my eldest son, who expired this morning.

"When darkness fell, we were compelled gradually to retreat, as the Free State side had been weakened to such an extent that it was impossible for the rest of the Free Staters to hold their ground, so much so that Major Albrecht, who had fought so bravely, asked me to protect his artillery.

"The Free State loss is unknown to me."

The total losses of the enemy, in what Lord Methuen claimed to be "one of the most fiercely-contested battles in the annals of the British army," amounted to close on 500 men. Giving Prinsloo's and Cronje's divisions each a loss equal to De la Rey's, and counting the twenty wounded who were alleged to have been killed by the Guards after the battle, the total Federal losses would be under 100. The artillery lost eight of its men, including a young German officer, Lieutenant Stuckenberg.

Lord Methuen's contention that he had been opposed by 8,000 burghers at Modder River was on a par with his boastful comparison between his own and such secondary achievements as Wellington's at Waterloo. The combined Federal commandoes by which he was fought numbered no more than 3,000 men.

The behavior of some of Methuen's officers and men after the battle of Modder River was an outrage upon almost every code of civilized warfare. It was worthy of the Lancers at Elandslaagte. In one of the houses in the rear of the little village some twenty Boers were lying wounded. This house was near the center of Cronje's position, and was therefore within the zone of fire during the day. These wounded men were all ruthlessly bayoneted by a body of Guardsmen, after the fight had ceased, on the pretence that the house where the disabled burghers lay must have been fired from while the Guards were being badly cut up in the heat of the morning's encounter. Not a single shot had been fired from the building after the wounded had been placed inside it, and the killing of the men found within it in the evening was simply an act of revengeful fury.

An English version of this incident, given by the "Daily Chronicle" war correspondent, reads as follows:

"While the Argylls were pushing across the river they were fired upon from the house and several fell, whereupon a dozen of the Highlanders stormed the house, and, tho the enemy hoisted the white flag, no quarter was given. They were all shot. The enemy had acted most unscrupulously, shelling our field hospital, so that some of our wounded were killed, and repeatedly firing on our stretcher parties."

The Boer officer who repeated the facts to me was confident that the deed was done, not by Highlanders, but by Guards, as related. The counter allegation made by the "Chronicle" correspondent is given here in order to have both sides heard. The other charges made by the Boers have not been denied. There has not been a duly authenticated instance of an ambulance or Red Cross outrage

committed by the Boer forces established, even by English testimony, throughout the whole war.

On the morning following the battle seven doctors and thirty attendants were busy dressing the wounds of some Boers in some houses east of the hotel, where the Transvaalers had held the river bank against the attacks of the Guards. The Red Cross flag was exposed, and two or three ambulance carts, also bearing the Cross, were near by. An English officer arrived with troops, and arrested all the doctors and their attendants, and claimed the wounded as prisoners. Remonstrance was of no avail. The doctors gave their names and addresses, but they were told "it would all be inquired into," and were forbidden to attend to the wounded. This treatment continued during Wednesday and Thursday. On the evening of that day all the medical staff were ordered to board the train for Cape Town as prisoners. During the journey to De Aar, one of the wounded claimed the attention of the doctors. They were not allowed to go near him; the officer to whom the request was made replied: "Let the —— Boer die!" They were locked up in filthy cells during a night's stay at De Aar; the prison guard being instructed by this same officer: "You kick them if they move, and shoot them if they come near the door." Dr. Charles J. Lever published an account of their subsequent treatment by the British, from which I take the following extract:

"We arrived at Cape Town, after a wearisome journey, on Monday, at noon, and were taken to the New Military Hospital, or prison, where we were detained. The Commandant expressed his opinion to the effect that a huge blunder had occurred, and we were ordered to be in readiness to leave by the 9 o'clock train that night. We were marched from the docks to the railway station and sent back to Modder River.

"I do not attempt to describe the indignities or the inconvenience to which we were subjected. Suffice it to say that traveling in cattle trucks, confinement in that most delectable jail at De Aar, gratuitous impertinence from sundry officers and minor details of heat, dirt, and general discomfort, were the main features of our journey.

"We were captured without any assigned reason, returned with the consolation that a huge blunder had been made, and it is now for the civilized world to comment and for high authorities to adjudicate upon the unwarrantable treatment accorded by the British military authorities to the members of an ambulance staff, working in the most sacred interests of humanity, under the recognized auspices of the Geneva Convention.—I am, etc.,

"CHARLES J. LEVER.

"P.S.—I may further mention that, on our return to Modder River, restitution of our ambulance wagons, cattle, horses, etc., was

refused, and we had to make our way to our own lines on foot, a distance of some nine miles.

"Jacobsdal, Orange Free State, December 10, 1899."

As a testimony to the general conduct of the Boers, in contrast with that of their foes, at and after the fight at Modder River, the following evidence, tendered by the war correspondent of the ultra-Jingo "Globe," of London, will sustain my general proposition, that in all stages and circumstances of this war the Boer has shown himself, in every respect, the moral superior of the Briton:

"We learned that the Boers are by no means the undisciplined rabble which some people would have us believe. It is not too much to say that there was more indiscriminate looting done after the Modder River fight in a few days by the British than was done by the Boers in the whole six weeks before the fight. It is certainly worthy of remark that the Boers, who are not supposed to have any discipline at all, have, in this part of the country, apparently behaved with exemplary consideration for the rights of private property. While on the subject of Boer discipline and behavior, I forgot to mention another important feature in their character and mode of life. I have seen it stated in some papers occasionally that they have been drunk in their trenches and in camps, having looted wine and spirit stores in various towns and villages. I have ascertained that this is absolutely untrue. Drunkenness is practically unknown in their camps. They do not drink wine or spirits; their only intoxicant is a mixed concoction, of which they drink very little."

Chapter XIX

BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN

PRESIDENT STEYN ARRIVES WITH REENFORCEMENTS—STEYN AND DE LA REY OVERRULE CRONJE, AND SELECT MAGERSFONTEIN AS BATTLE-FIELD—DESCRIPTION OF ENTRENCHMENTS—DISPOSITION OF BOER FORCES—FEINT OF FREE STATE COMMANDOES DECEIVES METHUEN—INEFFECTIVE TWO DAYS' ARTILLERY ATTACK BY BRITISH—CRONJE'S SPEECH TO HIS SOLDIERS—GIVES ORDER TO FIRE ON APPROACHING HIGHLANDERS—THEIR ANNIHILATION—FATE OF FIFTY OF THE SCANDINAVIAN CORPS—INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLE—ENGLISH AND BOER LOSSES—METHUEN MAGNIFIES HIS ENEMY'S FORCE—LONDON "STANDARD" ON BOER HUMANITY—BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

THE three battles of the week, terminating in the sanguinary encounter at Modder River, fixed the excited attention of the civilized world upon Methuen's effort to reach Kimberley. General White's reverses in Natal had prepared the public for a similar development of successful Boer resistance against another English army, and, tho the accounts of the Belmont, Enslin, and Modder River fights were mainly supplied from British sources, it was plainly seen that Methuen's victories were of a Pyrrhic character, and were enticing him forward towards the growing risk of a serious disaster.

The main body of the Boer forces retired eastward by the north bank of the Riet River after the battle of the 28th of November, and laagered near Jacobsdal; a commando of the Free Staters going north along the railway to Scholtznek as a strong patrol to guard the line to Kimberley. Cronje and De la Rey remained at Jacobsdal for two days, and then moved across the Modder and reached Scholtznek, by a march west, past Magersfontein.

Scholtznek is an elevated flat-topped ridge, connecting two higher kopjes which bend southward at the extremities; one side sloping down to the veldt north of Magersfontein, and the other descending in a similar direction west of the railway; the line running in between, and crossing over to the Nek to Spytfontein, which is between Modder River Junction and Kimberley.

President Steyn came from Bloemfontein to Scholtznek to encourage the burghers in their resolve to prevent the relief of Rhodes' headquarters. He succeeded in obtaining for Cronje

about 1,500 more men from the south, and from around Kimberley; the advent of Christian De Wet to the lines before the latter city enabling the investment to be continued by a much smaller force. In fact, Colonel Kekewich and his garrison of 4,000 men were kept within the limits of their investment by 2,000 Boers, while Cronje and De la Rey were fighting the battle of Magersfontein. Cronje's entire force in this battle amounted to close on 5,000 men, with 3 (7.5 c.m.) Krupp guns, 3 pom-poms, and 1 old Krupp, under the control of Major Albrecht. The Transvaalers included men of the Potchefstroom, Bloemof, and Gatsrand commandoes, numbering, with a small Scandinavian brigade, about 2,500 burghers. The Free State Boers were chiefly from the Bloemfontein, Hoopstadt, Winburg, Boshof, Jacobsdal, and Ladybrand districts; in all, some 2,000 men, with about 500 Afrikander volunteers, mainly from Griqualand West.

A Kriegsraad was held at Scholtznek to consider the plan of action by which the further advance of Methuen should be met. General Cronje was in favor of making the position of Scholtznek the next battle-ground. To this proposal De la Rey was strongly opposed. He referred to the fact that the burghers had fought better in the entrenched positions on the low ground at Modder River than on the kopjes at Belmont and Enslin, and that the English had suffered greater loss at the last than at the previous battles. He also insisted that, from a purely strategical point of view, it would be wiser to fight Methuen with the Scholtznek positions to fall back upon in the event of a defeat than to select those kopjes for the field of a final encounter, with Kimberley immediately behind them. He favored the stand being made a few miles nearer the Modder, at some "rands" or ridges which ran westward from the railway, parallel with the Modder River, and distant some three miles north of that stream. Cronje was imperiously in favor of his own plan, and the intervention of President Steyn had to be invoked to decide between the rival proposals of the two generals. Mr. Steyn gave his decision emphatically in favor of De la Rey, and Magersfontein was accordingly chosen for the next encounter with Methuen's army.

Trenches were dug at the base of the ridges, right across from the railway, and away east to where the kopje slopes downward in the direction of the river. These entrenchments were some five feet deep and three wide, and gave complete shelter to the burghers; a screen of mimosa- and vaal-bushes being placed a few feet in front of the pits, to hide the earth which the digging of the deep trenches had piled on the ground, and also to conceal the entrenched riflemen from view.

On the top and behind the ridges, strong sangars and trenches were likewise built, and with special structures for the guns, which commanded both the railway and the pass running from the plain through the Boer position on to Scholtznek. Behind the kopje the ground dipped a little for a mile or two, and then rose again in the direction of the higher hill at Spytfontein.

These trenches and positions were constantly occupied every night from the 5th to the 10th of December by Cronje's forces, under the most rigorous system of inspection. Every other man in the line of trenches slept for two hours, while his neighbor, Mauser in hand, waited for the signal from the sentinels in advance of the lines which was to tell of the enemy's approach. The sleepers awoke and resumed the vigil, while their comrades slept in turn. At 3.30 each morning the whole line was alert, and an inspection of the enemy's position at the river junction was made to ascertain if any forward movement was in preparation. If no sign of such movement was seen, the whole force left the trenches and retired behind the hills, where they either slept during the daytime or attended to the duties of the commandoes. The English balloons always found Cronje's men in these daily locations, away north and east of the concealed trenches.

General Cronje's laager was five miles northeast of Magersfontein, where Mrs. Cronje and other officers' wives and friends were encamped. He retired there each night early, and was found back again in the lines inspecting the positions regularly at two o'clock every morning.

The Federal forces were disposed as follows over lines extending fully three miles: The extreme left of Cronje's position reached almost to the river, and was held by General De la Rey with a section of the Transvaalers and some Free State burghers. The brave but ill-fated Scandinavian Corps, under Field Cornet Flygare, occupied a post of observation in advance of De la Rey, on some rising ground. Next to De la Rey's men, Cronje's burghers occupied the trenches immediately under the ridge, and as far as the pass. The Hoopstadt, Kroonstadt, Bloemfontein, Boshof, and other Free Staters, with the Colonial Volunteers, lined the ridges further west, crossing the railway and extending to Basset's Farm, where the old road from Modder River Junction mounted to Scholtznek, on the way to Kimberley.

The guns were behind the ridges dominating the railway and road, in between the positions held by the Free State and Transvaal burghers.

Lord Methuen rested his forces at Modder River Junction from the 29th of November to the 9th of the following month. His

Commandant Steenekamp General Cronje Commandant Van der Merwe

CRONJE AND LIEUTENANTS AROUND ONE OF THE CREUSOT GUNS

losses so far had been fully ten per cent. of his entire strength, and the advance from his base at De Aar had rendered his line of communications longer and weaker as his progress towards Kimberley increased. There was, therefore, a double reason why he should await reenforcements before making his next attempt to get past the opposing forces in his front. Both general and troops had also learned something of the fighting qualities of their opponents, and the respect which these had enforced after three stubbornly-contested engagements and 1,000 British casualties rendered additional help in men and guns a necessity for the task in hand.

Accordingly, the Highland Brigade, under General Wauchope, a regiment of Lancers, Australian and Canadian Volunteers, and other levies, were despatched from Cape Town, together with two additional batteries of artillery, including a 4.7 naval gun, throwing a fifty-pound lyddite shell. Methuen's force, on the eve of his attack on Cronje, comprised close on 14,000 of the flower of the British army, including Guards and Highland regiments. He had a total of 38 field pieces.

Methuen has been blamed by military critics for not having made his next move forward over the veldt, west of the railway line and of Scholtznek, rather than by the way of Magersfontein. Obviously, other things being equal, that would have been the route of least difficulties, in the shape of kopjes and strong positions; and, for these reasons, the least advantageous for Cronje, with his relatively small opposing forces. The English general was compelled, however, to make the security of his communications a governing factor in his movements, and this fact enabled Cronje and De la Rey so to maneuver their commandoes, a few days previous to the 11th of December, as to force Methuen to fight over the ground on which the Boer generals had planned the theater of the next encounter.

On the 8th of December a column of 800 burghers splendidly mounted, composed of Free State Boers of the Fauresmith and Jacobsdal commandoes, with Colonial Volunteers, and led by Commandant Lubbe, crossed the Modder and Riet rivers, east of the Federal laager, under cover of the night, and swept southward, as a saddle commando, on Enslin. The enemy were completely surprised at this appearance of a strong force south of their camp at Modder River Junction, and were induced, in consequence, to strengthen their position at that point. This reconnaissance also compelled Methuen to abandon all idea of moving forward by any route which would leave his right flank exposed to an attack by what he believed to be a cooperating Boer force operating against his line of communications. After having created this impression

for the purposes of their plans, the flying column was back again at Magersfontein on the night of the 10th.

On the early morning of Saturday, the Rev. Mr. Du Toit, a young Afrikander clergyman, was conducting a religious service behind the kopje which flanked the pass from the veldt over the ridge, when the boom of a large cannon was heard from the direction of the enemy, and as the word "Amen" was pronounced, ending the service, a lyddite shell burst just beyond the circle of the burgher congregation. No one was hit. Methuen's 4.7 naval gun had opened the battle of Magersfontein. During the whole of Saturday and Sunday the bombardment of the Boer positions continued, indicating in the stereotyped manner of the enemy that the time for a general attack was close at hand. There was no response of any kind from Cronje's guns. All was still as death, from the top of Scholtznek, in the rear, to the sunlit banks of the Modder River, with never a sign or a sound to speak of the presence of battery or Boer, of men or Mausers, where the rocks were rent asunder and the veldt was plowed by a rain of shells. Down in the trenches below the ridge men smoked their pipes in security, clutched their rifles, and lay still. Away on the north slope of the ridges, and in the secure shelter of Scholtznek, officers and men viewed the English batteries in perfect safety, and awaited the hour when the men behind the English guns should come within reach of bullets, when accounts should be settled for the killing of the wounded at Modder River, and for "the pig-sticking" of Elandslaagte. The results of Methuen's two days' artillery attack were three Boers killed and about double the number wounded.

At midnight on Sunday General Cronje was discovered in the trenches. He had ridden over from the laager in the rain with the intelligence that the attack by the enemy's infantry was to be made in a few hours. The entire lines were manned at once, and every burgher and officer placed in position. The general inspected every point from the east to the west of his lines, and had every necessary preparation made long before the dark shadows of the doomed Highlanders were to be seen carelessly marching into the jaws of awaiting death.

The evening previously Cronje had received a telegram from Commandant-General Joubert reporting the progress of events in Natal, and sending a message of encouragement to the western commandoes, urging them to fight bravely for "Land un Volk." General Cronje read the message to his officers and men, after which he addressed them in the following few characteristic words:

"Burghers—You have listened to the general's telegram. Before

you stands here Cronje. You know him. From the early days he was classed among the forefighters. How many bombs went over his head, or fell before his feet ? How many bullets whistled right and left of him ? And here he still stands before you, unharmed ! Where is your faith ? Believe that no bullet will hit you or do you any harm, without the will of God ! Where is your faith ? You must not continue to lie in the trenches, but when it is necessary you must upsaddle your horses, and storm the English in the flats."

There has been much controversy in Boer as in English circles as to the nature of the signal which warned the burghers of the approach of the Highland Brigade. The theory of a "flashing light" carried by Boer scouts who marched with the Highlanders, is too absurd for any but British war correspondent purposes. Such scouts would have been shot down along with the enemy by their own friends in the entrenchments. It has been claimed for three of the Hoopstadt commando, Cornelis Greyling and two Magnus brothers, that they were the first to discern the forms of the Tommies in the mist, and to warn the burghers with the fire of their rifles. I was assured, however, by both President Steyn, Judge Hertzog, and the Rev. Mr. Marquardt, who were present during the battle, that the first discovery of the enemy's movement was made by General Cronje himself, who, on going his rounds in that direction, saw the troops approaching, and gave the order to fire which sealed the fate of the Black Watch and of their brave general.

It has been related in English versions of this battle that a barbed wire fence formed part of General Cronje's defenses, and that it was a contact with this obstruction in the darkness of the early morning of December 11 by the Black Watch which gave the alarm to the Boer lines. There was no such special wire fence in existence. Any such obstacle, at the point where Wauchope and his Highlanders were first fired upon, would have tended to frustrate the design for which the trenches were so well concealed. This plan was to allow the enemy to approach as near as possible to the base of the ridge, without suspecting the presence of the burghers in the rifle-trenches below, and it is obvious that a fence of any kind built across the veldt 300 or 400 yards from the entrenchments would defeat this purpose. There was an ordinary wire fence on the farm of Magersfontein, but it had been there for years, and was intended to enclose a sheep and cattle ranch, and not to serve as part of a plan of battle. This boundary fence played nothing save an accidental part in the events of the 11th of December.

The enemy's plan of attack was to move the Highland Brigade

forward on Sunday night, parallel with the Modder, and then wheel to the left towards one of two passes which led from the veldt through the ridges, on towards the eastern slope of Scholtznek; the object evidently being to clear and hold the ridges for the advance of the artillery and supporting columns, by which the hills ahead were to be assailed, and the Boers driven from the way to Kimberley. Neither Methuen nor Wauchope had calculated upon finding Cronje's center entrenched where they believed his outposts or brandwachts would alone be met with, and hence the fate of the Highland Brigade was sealed.

This brigade was made up of the Black Watch, the Highland Light Infantry, the Argylls, Seaforths, and Sutherlands. From the English accounts of Wauchope's advance towards the passes in the ridge, it appears that his men were kept in quarter column formation until they were fired upon. This fact reflects no blame upon the general, under the circumstances. The darkness of the early morning, the difficulty of keeping a large body of men in touch with each other while moving over strange ground, coupled with the ignorance of Methuen's intelligence officers as to the true location of the Boer lines, explain the otherwise culpable negligence of the order of march. The ridges ahead were manifestly intended to be the cover for the first operations of Wauchope and his men, and the open space immediately south of these ridges would have given him the occasion and opportunity for deploying his brigade previous to the ascent of the pass, had he not been surprised. It, however, showed on the unfortunate general's part a strange ignorance of Boer methods of warfare to approach within a couple of hundred yards of elevated ground, presumably only a few miles in front of his enemy's main position, without preparing for a possible attack, even by outposts.

It was about half-past three in the morning of Monday when General Cronje, on making his rounds, noted the silent approach of the enemy. The space in front of the trenches was open southward to the river, with nothing but the level veldt between the Boers and their foes, except here and there a vaal-bush or a clump of mimosa shrubs. The falling rain obscured the struggling efforts of the dawn to spread itself over the landscape with the light that heralds the morning, and the forms of the marching soldiers were not discernible in the gloom; but the heavy tramp of 4,000 men could be heard coming nearer and nearer, until the mass of troops looming out of the mist like a wall of moving matter, approached within 100 yards of the entrenchments. Then a hurricane of pelting leaden hail leaped out of the darkness, sweeping from right to left, and the black animated wall fell down, and groans and

cries from wounded men rent the air. Out from under the ridges and from the trenches to the right came a ceaseless and merciless torrent of lead, the bushes concealing the flashes from the Mausers, but the missiles plowing their way through the now falling and wildly rushing ranks of the doomed brigade. In half a minute after the signal to fire had been given by Cronje, over 700 of the Highlanders were strewn like swaths of grass before the mowers on the plain; among them being the ill-fated Wauchope, who was shot dead in the first volley. The fiction woven around a dying message was absurd on the face of it. Three bullets had passed through his body, and no sound ever escaped his lips that could be heard amidst the detonating storm of the burgher fire.

No man born of woman could stand against such a fusillade from out of the unknown positions beyond, and, with the whole first and second lines of their column struck down as by an earthquake, the Highland Brigade broke and fled from the field. Many had thrown themselves prostrate on the veldt after the first shock, and escaped the fate of their comrades for a time; but as the moving hours began to lift the mist from the plain these Tommies became visible objects to the fierce eyes behind the vaal-bushes, and death continued to tell the bead-roll of his British victims that early morning. Pity it was that Celtic blood should have paid so dear a penalty for so ignoble a cause, and that men from Highland glens and isles, sons of once liberty-loving clans, should be the fallen foemen of a brave little Protestant nation, fighting for life and liberty against the hereditary enemy of "the Celtic Fringe."

The troops in the rear of the Black Watch rushed back in the disorder of a panic from the scene of so terrible a reception. Attempts were made to rally them again, but it could be seen from the trenches as the light of the growing day increased that these efforts were in vain. The lesson of that awful minute or two had done its work. The battle of Magersfontein had already been fought and won.

The Seaforth Highlanders were rallied about seven o'clock through the imprudent action of the Scandinavian Corps. Some fifty of this body, under Field Cornet Flygare, were about 1,000 yards in advance of De la Rey's trenches, on a piece of rising ground with some vaal-bushes upon it. They had occupied that position as an outpost to watch against any turning movement by the river against De la Rey's trenches, during Saturday and Sunday. On seeing the Highlanders decimated and demoralized, after the fire from the entrenchments, Flygare, Baron Helge Fagerskold, and other young members of the corps, believing the enemy were quitting the field, moved from their position out into the veldt, and

SHOOTING BACK THE BRITISH

opened fire upon the nearest body of Scotchmen. These chanced to be Seaforths, and, seeing how few their assailants were, they immediately advanced upon the Scandinavians. It was fully 800 against half a hundred, but the Norsemen nobly, if rashly, held their ground, and were surrounded and cut to pieces; 39 out of 53 being killed and wounded, seven taken prisoners; the other seven, who were in charge of the horses, escaping into De la Rey's lines in the rear.

The gallant Scandinavians fought like lions, many of them being found the following day with three or four dead or wounded Englishmen around them, showing how dearly they had made the enemy pay for the lives taken. Both Field Cornet Flygare and Baron Fagerskold were found stripped and robbed. According to a statement made by Charles Uggla, President of the Scandinavian Organization in the Transvaal, "the rifle of Carl Albers Olsson lay by his side, and, in addition to several bayonet wounds, he had also three rifle wounds. Fifty of our corps took part in the fight, and only seven came out unscathed. We found that the bodies of our men were all robbed, and Commandant Flygare was stark naked; even his spectacles had been removed."

The Scandinavians did not fall unavenged. News of the unequal encounter they were waging was brought to the Boer lines by the men in charge of the horses, whereupon the Ficksburg men and 100 other burghers under De Villiers leaped into their saddles and dashed across the field, taking the Seaforths in the flank when retiring after the fight with the brave but impetuous Flygare and his decimated corps. The burghers returned to the ridges, bringing about thirty Highlanders as prisoners, having shot the others back from the field.

Another daring feat was carried through in the midst of the terrific bombardment by the enemy's entire artillery when the Gordons were sent forward to attack De la Rey's position. This point was held by some of the Fauresmith, Boshof, and Ladybrand men, along with Transvaal burghers, and Cronje ordered 300 men from the ridges behind the center to ride to De la Rey's assistance. This they did, right across the space which was being swept by Methuen's guns, but, before they had reached the men whom they were intended to reenforce, the converging Mauser fire from the center and flank entrenchments had driven the Gordons pell-mell back behind their artillery, in a veritable *sauve qui peut*.

One of the most remarkable features of the fearful struggle in front of the ridges was the silence of the Boer guns. Not a shot had been fired by them from the time the Black Watch were mowed down until the enemy commenced to retire from the battle-field

with ranks hopelessly shattered and broken. There were the crouching lines of demoralized troops, scattered over the face of the veldt 200 or 300 yards away; unable to go further back, afraid to approach any nearer the circle of fire and death which the Mausers behind the vaal-bushes had drawn in the blood of England's soldiers across the impurpled plain. Three pom-poms and three Krupps were away a little to the west, guarding the Boer right, the railway, and the road to Scholtznek, but near enough to sweep the open space now dotted with khaki-colored prostrate forms. Not a shot nor a sign came from Major Albrecht's artillery! The English guns thundered from behind the enemy's lines; battery after battery raining shells upon the ridges, the hills behind them, upon the entire length of Cronje's lines from where at Basset's Farm the gallant Hoopstadt burghers under Commandant Greyling fired from the cover of their sangars, to where the marksmen of the Gatsrand and Potchefstroom had strewn the ground in front of their trenches with British dead—naval guns and howitzers, field pieces, mountain batteries, and Maxims rained shrapnel, lyddite, and bullets for hours. But no Boer gun spoke in reply. There lay the lines, unshaken and unbroken, where Cronje's 5,000 farmers held at bay 13,000 foemen and forty guns, with no weapon but the Mauser rifle. It was a magnificent and unparalleled display of superb coolness; that reliance upon calm courage and steady nerves and ready aim to beat back so great a force from the ridge they had confidently and proudly hoped to cross over the broken ranks of the Boers.

After this state of things had continued for several hours, and ineffectual attempts had been made by Guards and Gordons and Lancers to make some impression on the Boer lines, General Cronje, with seven adjutants or members of his staff took a stand on the extreme east of De la Rey's position to judge of the possibility of an attack upon the enemy's right flank along the river. At that very time the Lancers were feeling the way for a similar movement round De la Rey's left. Suddenly, on rounding a stony elevation, about a mile eastward of the Boer entrenchments, a troop of some 200 Lancers were sighted only 400 yards away. The distance to De la Rey's position was too far for any thought of immediate help from there, and the Lancers had seen the mounted burghers emerge from the back of the small kopje. Retreat was possible and easy, but Cronje's voice rang out in his peremptory tones: "Schiet hulle terug!"—"Shoot them back!" The seven burghers dismounted, spread themselves over the stony hillock, and opened fire upon the Lancers, emptying saddles at every shot. Cronje, with his inseparable karwats in hand, sat his horse while his body-guard held

off the Lancers, who, thinking that the hill was hiding a big force of Boers behind those who were firing, wheeled round and galloped back to their lines.

The remnants of the Black Watch and Seaforths absolutely refused to advance again into the death-trap of the open space, where their comrades lay stark in death, and others cried in vain for water and help. It is no reflection on their courage that they left the field cursing the authors of the disaster. The Gordons had been led away round to the right from the place where Wauchope and his men had fallen in the first onset of the fray. So had the Guards, in order that they should not be unnerved by the sight of the heaps of their slain and stricken comrades; but the way they were taken so as to escape this unmanning spectacle landed them where De la Rey's entrenchments were on the right flank and where Roos with his Potchefstroomers held them in front. It was a greater blunder than that into which bad direction had led the unfortunate Wauchope and his men in the early morning, and, on a converging fire being opened upon them, the Guards first and Gordons after turned and ran from the foes they could neither see nor face.

While this panic lasted some field pieces of the enemy's artillery which had been moved forward to within 2,000 yards of the Boer entrenchments, to support the advance of the Guards and Gordons, were left on the veldt, after these regiments had retreated. The men who served them were caught in the rush of the Guards backward, and were swept along. The guns remained there between both forces for hours; Cronje unable with the fewness of his men and guns to bring them in, with 30 other British guns 1,000 yards or so in their rear, while the enemy's forces were too demoralized to attempt their rescue. Finally, batteries in the rear came up behind the abandoned guns, while ambulance wagons were placed in front, and in the full view of the burghers on the ridges the guns were thus rescued, the mules from one Red Cross wagon being unhitched and attached to the limber of one of the guns.

It was now well on in the afternoon, and it was evident to Cronje and De la Rey that the enemy was thoroughly beaten all along the line. The renewed activity of Methuen's guns was meant as a cover for the retreat of the forces on Modder River, and Major Albrecht was at last permitted after the impatience of the day to let loose his few guns to hasten the departure of the beaten British army from the most disastrous field English troops had fought upon for fifty years. Thus, after a silence of fully eight hours in so sanguinary a battle, did the final act in Cronje's plan of defensive aggression develop itself, in the use of his few guns upon a retreating

enemy when the fire of Krupp and pom-pom could no longer direct, by the evidence of their positions in the Boer lines, the enemy's overwhelming artillery to the places where the deadlier weapon of the rifle with its fifteen shots per minute built an impregnable wall of fire and death before the British legions. There on the ridge, close to the pass through which Wauchope was to have marched his men on that fateful morning, Piet Cronje stood, whip in hand, with the fierce light of triumph in his eyes, gazing exultingly across the plain as 12,000 or 13,000 of England's best troops and seven batteries of her guns were driven from the field by the defenders of Transvaal liberty. Turning to his secretary, Cronje dictated the following brief message to President Kruger:

"God has given a great victory to the Federal forces. The enemy were repulsed three times with fearful losses. Our casualties were small. The Scandinavian Corps lost heavily.

"CRONJE."

A full and complete account of the total Boer losses in the battle of Magersfontein was published, name by name, on January 15, 1900, in the Free State and Transvaal press; the number of killed being 71, and of wounded 165. Of these no less than 19 killed and 20 wounded belonged to the heroic little band of Scandinavian Uitlanders who fell before the onslaught of the Seaforth Highlanders.

The English losses have been variously given at figures ranging from 1,000 to 1,500. The Highland Brigade alone left 700 men on the field. Wauchope's Black Watch lost 300 men and 20 officers.

Lord Methuen's puerile attempt to minimize the significance of his defeat by asserting that there were "16,000 Boers in front of him" at Magersfontein stands ridiculed in absolute refutation by the Blue Book "African Despatches (Vol. I., pp. 17, 18), February, 1901," where Lord Roberts gives the names of Commandants and Field Cornets, and names and numbers of commandoes of Cronje's army on its surrender at Paardeberg, two months after Magersfontein. The total strength is given at 3,919 men, with 150 wounded. Adding to these figures the number of killed and wounded at Paardeberg, and the casualties at Magersfontein, it will be found that they correspond with the estimate of 5,000 men which I have given of Cronje's united forces at the battle of the 11th December, allowing for 500 or 600 Colonial Volunteers and Transvaalers who took part in both battles, but were not caught in the trap of Paardeberg.

The (London) "Standard" war correspondent, writing from the

battle-field (January 8, 1900), bore the following testimony to the humanity of the victorious Boers:

"In the intervals of armistice which were subsequently arranged, the enemy behaved with great courtesy. They had given water to our wounded of the Highland Brigade early in the morning after the battle. These poor fellows had lain all day Monday under heavy fire and hot sun, and all Monday night, which was particularly cold, without water, and they had had no food since Sunday evening. The Boer Commander, General Cronje, was exceedingly courteous and kind, assisting in every way possible. He further offered 50 burghers to help to bury our dead. Lord Methuen sent a letter of thanks to General Cronje for his courtesy."

On the day after the battle, as the Boers were in the act of assisting the burial of their dead enemies, the naval gun at Methuen's camp opened fire upon the Boer positions, despite the armistice which Cronje had granted. The English chaplain had to ride back to the British lines to have the firing stopped.

The English dead were very badly buried, and General Cronje had to communicate with Lord Methuen on Wednesday to point out that the work was so hastily done that limbs were protruding from the too shallow pits in which the bodies had been interred. I was solemnly assured by the Rev. Mr. Marquardt, of the Dutch Reformed Church, who was present during the scene, which he described with a shudder, that the second burial party sent by Methuen were all intoxicated while performing the gruesome task of re-burying their comrades. Drink was, it appears, deemed to be necessary for the burying party, owing to the rapid decomposition of the bodies after lying some days in the broiling sun. Some of the Tommies jumped on the covering of the pits so as to press down the bulging carcases of the dead. A horrible and sickening scene, truly; but it is only by the painting of war in its true and ghastly character, and not in its tinsel trappings, that the victims of war—the working men—may be induced not to lend their support to those who wage war for other than noble and patriotic ends.

The tragic but true soldierly death of General Wauchope greatly impressed the entire Federal forces, officers and men. Every mark of respect was shown to the body on the battle-field; his dirk and other personal belongings being reverently preserved until they could be forwarded to the dead chieftain's family. The Landrost of Hoopstadt, into whose custody they were given for safety, authorized me to say in my letters to the Dublin "Freeman's Journal" that these mementoes of a gallant foeman's fall would be sent by him

to General Wauchope's relatives whenever applied for. Intimation to this effect was made after my return from the Transvaal to the British Secretary for War, through the medium of a question in the House of Commons.

I must now leave General Cronje and his great victory until, in the course of this story, the fatal retreat to Paardeberg has to be related.

Chapter XX

BATTLE OF STORMBERG

THE FREE STATE FRONTIER—ENGLISH FORCES UNDER GATACRE AND FRENCH—DISPOSITION OF BOER FORCES—BOERS RESTRAINED FROM INVADING CAPE COLONY BY POLITICAL REASONS—COLONIALS JOIN BOERS—ENGLISH CONFIDENCE IN GATACRE—HIS SEVERE MILITARY MEASURES—NIGHT EXPEDITION OF BRITISH AGAINST STORMBERG—THEIR RECEPTION BY THE BOERS—PANIC FLIGHT OF THE BRITISH—COMPARISON OF BRITISH WITH BOER LOSSES—SKETCH OF GENERAL OLLIVIER—ROLL OF COLONIAL RECRUITS OF THE BOERS.

WHILE Joubert and his commandoes were driving the British troops before them in Natal, and Cronje and De la Rey were holding a second British force in check at Modder River, two other English armies were advancing from the south to the Free State frontier. The objects of these forces were to defend certain strategic positions south of the Orange River, and to compel the Federal Governments to detach burghers from the two main Boer forces operating in the east and west to defend the way to Bloemfontein. One of these was commanded by General Gatacre, and had its base at East London. From this port a railway runs northwest to the Orange Free State border, a distance of some 150 miles, reaching at about two-thirds of that way the Stormberg range of hills. South of this range, at Queenstown, the British camp was formed. The line crosses the hills from thence, and reaches Molteno and Stormberg junctions. From this latter place one branch line goes westward, to Rosmead, where it connects with the main line from Port Elizabeth, which, in turn, branches out at Naauwpoort; one line going west, to join the Cape Town to Kimberley line at De Aar, and the other striking due north and crossing the Orange River at Norvals Pont, running in a straight course from thence to Bloemfontein. The other branch from Stormberg Junction goes north and divides again at Albert Junction, some twenty miles nearer the river; one branch going east to Aliwal North, where it ends, and the other going northwest over the river at Bethulie, and joining the line from Naauwpoort at Springfontein in the Free State.

There were three positions of importance ahead of General Gat-

acre's camp which were occupied by British troops in October: Stormberg, Albert Junction, and Aliwal North, all in a strong pro-Boer district, which, being immediately south of the Orange River, contained a large percentage of Dutch colonists who had intermarried with their kindred over the border.

The fourth British army, which was largely composed of mounted men, was under the command of General French, who had succeeded in breaking away from Ladysmith after the battle of Modderspruit; narrowly escaping the experiences of the siege of that town which followed on White's defeat on the 30th of October. This force had Port Elizabeth as its base, and held the railways at Rosmead Junction, some 80 miles south of the Orange River, and a similar distance west of Gatacre's headquarters at Queenstown. Between the river and French's camp there was Norvals Pont, with its bridge over the stream, Colesberg, Arundel, and the important Junction of Naauwpoort; each place being in the occupation of small British forces during October, and containing, as in the corresponding districts in front of Gatacre's division, numbers of active sympathizers with the cause of the Republics.

On the north side of the Orange River the Boer forces were situated as follows:

The Free State Government, as pointed out in a previous chapter, had to divide its small army into three main divisions: one under Martinus Prinsloo, defending the northeastern border at Van Reenan's Pass, and cooperating with Joubert in Natal; another in the west, subdivided into the force besieging Kimberley, under Wessels, and the commando under Jacobus Prinsloo, in front of Methuen; the third being in the south, guarding the Orange River and the two lines of railway from East London and Port Elizabeth where they crossed into the Free State at Bethulie and Norvals Pont, respectively.

I have dealt with the operations of the eastern and western Free State commandoes up to the victories of Modderspruit and Magersfontein, and I purpose in this chapter to give a brief account of the doings of the remaining division of the little Free State army up to the brilliant triumph of Stormberg.

The southern commandoes were mainly recruited from the country south of Fauresmith and Wepener, and consisted of burghers from the Caledon River, Rouxville, Bethulie, and Philippolis districts. There were some 500 Transvaalers with these commandoes, while volunteers from the Cape Colony joined in large numbers after the Boers had crossed the river. The total force of the division before the invasion of the Colony was 3,500 men, with a mixed battery of Krupp guns and Maxim-Nordenfelts. The head com-

mand was vested in General E. R. Grobler, Vice-Chairman of the Free State Volksraad, while Commandants John Hendrik Ollivier of Rouxville, Swanepoll of Smithfield, and Du Plooy of Bethulie, were the chief officers of their respective commandoes. General Schoeman of the Potchefstroom district, with J. D. Celliers of Pretoria, as adjutant, was in charge of the Transvaal burghers included in this third or southern division of the Free State forces.

From the declaration of war until the 12th of November, fully a whole month, this strong body of fighting burghers lay immediately north of the Orange River, doing nothing, while the British were sending troops forward from East London and Port Elizabeth on the landing of every contingent from England. Naauwpoort and De Aar could have been taken in a week by 1,500 men up to the 20th of October, and by Grobler's force any time before the 1st of November. No move, however, was made on either of these strategically important junctions, and the enemy was permitted, unmolested, to strengthen his weak garrisons in the two most vital points for him to be able to hold south of the Orange River. I have referred to the cause of this most culpable act of irresolute policy in previous chapters, as being found in the existence of the Schreiner Ministry at the Cape. This Government attempted to sit on a British and a Boer stool, and thereby to keep in office. Unfortunately for the Boer cause they succeeded in the performance long enough to induce the Free State Government, through an over-scrupulous regard for Boer political kinship with the Afrikander Bond, to allow the English to rescue De Aar and Naauwpoort, by large reenforcements, from their perilous weakness. To every request made by the burghers on the river for permission to cross in October, the reply from Bloemfontein was—"Wait."

GENERAL E. R. GROBLER

The English fell back from their garrisons immediately south of the Free State border after the Boer victories in Natal, and the Colony to the north of Stormberg and Naauwpoort was left without a single British soldier. This evidence of British weakness impressed the population greatly, and the prestige of the Republics increased correspondingly. During the previous occupation of Aliwal North, Albert, Colesberg, and other places, the British had

played havoc with the fences and crops of both Dutch and Colonial farmers, and their departure south, on the strength of growing rumors of a Boer invasion, gave satisfaction to most of the people in these districts. Young Afrikanders had commenced to cross the river and to join the commandoes on the other side, and finally, on the 12th of November, orders were sent at last from Bloemfontein to General Grobler to march across and occupy the places vacated by the enemy's troops.

On the 13th, Commandant Ollivier took possession of Aliwal North, Commandant Du Plooy of Burghersdorp, while Generals Grobler and Schoeman crossed over the bridge at Norvals Pont, and hoisted the Free State flag at Colesberg. The invaders were received without protest by the Afrikander colonists, no opposition of any kind being offered, even by the British farmers, whose property was in no way interfered with. The Free State officers formally commandeered the available Afrikander youth, and others of maturer years, for the service of the Republican armies, and during the months of November and December a splendid fighting force of over 3,000 men were thus added to the strength of the Federal ranks. The whole northern region of the Cape Colony, from Barkly East to Prieska in the west, gave a passive recognition to the cause of the allied Republics. Schoeman was elected General for the Colesberg district, and found himself at the head of 2,000 men. He was urged to advance on Naauwpoort and to attack the growing, but as yet weak, garrison in charge of that important junction before it was reenforced with more troops. He dallied at Colesberg, wasted time, and allowed General French with 10,000 men to secure the place against any attack from the Free State. This inaction of Schoeman created much discontent among the burghers and Colonial volunteers, and, when General French began the offensive against his most irresolute adversary, it became necessary for the Free State Government to summon to the aid of the Colesberg Boers the sound military judgment and splendid fighting qualities of De la Rey. A record of the brilliant campaign waged by this great general against French and his legions will, however, require a separate chapter, and I must turn back again to this part of my story after dealing with the battles of Stormberg, Colenso, and Spion Kop.

Commandants Ollivier, Swanepoll, Du Plooy, and Steenekamp, with the Rouxville, Smithfield, Bethulie, and Burghersdorp men, moved forward in the latter part of November upon Stormberg Junction, which was distant only seventeen miles due north from Putterskraal, where General Gatacre's headquarters were then located. Three weeks before the advent of Ollivier, a garrison of 700

British troops had held Stormberg. These fell back on Molteno and then on Putterskraal, and Ollivier advanced from Burghersdorp and occupied the place which Gatacre resolved to attack on the 10th of December.

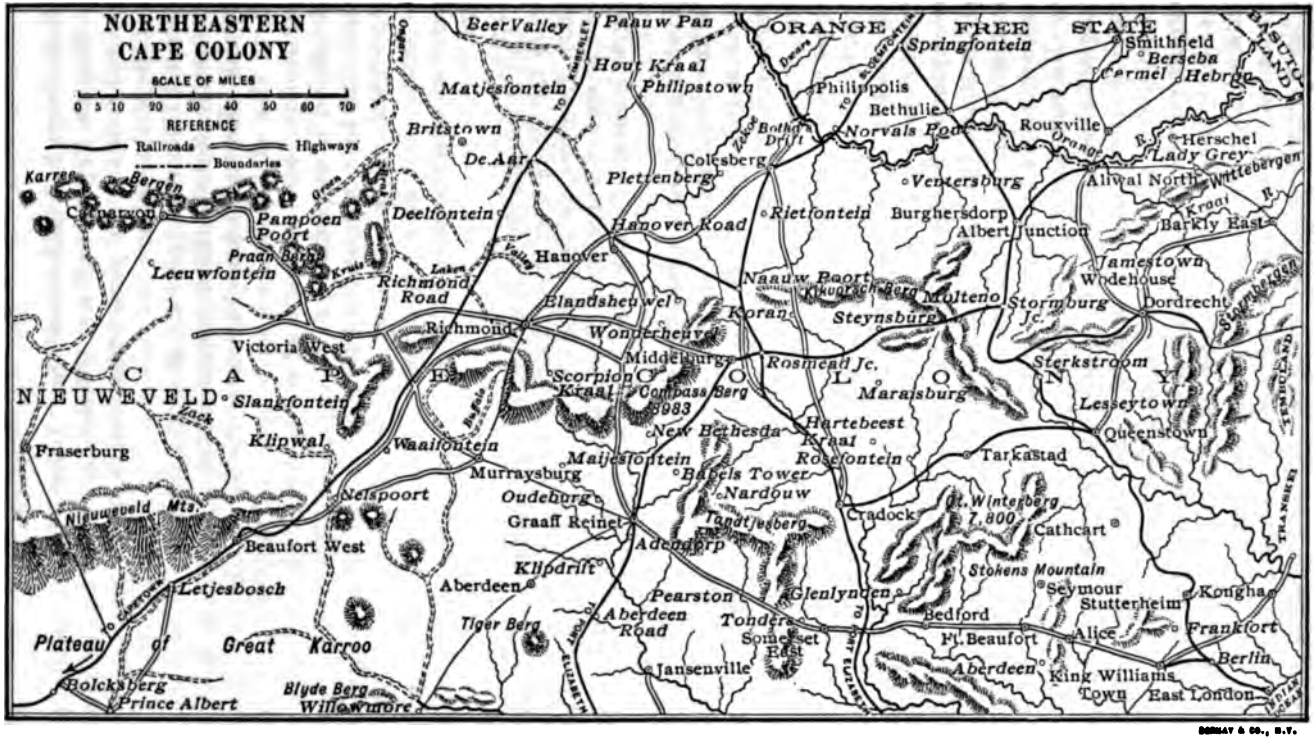
General Gatacre's expedition along the shortest and most direct line from the coast to Bloemfontein excited very sanguine hopes in England. He was spoken of as one of the ablest of British officers, and, in view of the demands made upon the Boer armies by the operations in Natal and south of Kimberley, it was felt as likely, and believed in as probable, that the prize of Bloemfontein might be snatched by a dash on the Free State capital, while Buller and Methuen were engaging the two most capable generals of the Federal forces. One Jingo paper spoke enthusiastically of what the Gatacre column was destined to achieve, in the following glowing terms:

"This is perhaps the most important expedition in the campaign, and, as the Boers have spent their strength upon the eastern and western frontiers, General Gatacre may be able to make a dash over the open country upon Bloemfontein, which, if it does not 'stagger humanity,' will at least astonish the world."

That was one week before Stormberg.

Before the advance was decided upon, which certainly did astonish the world in its result, General Gatacre had resorted to the sternest military measures for the intimidation of Dutch sympathizers with his foes on the line of his progress north. A letter received from one of the soldiers in this expedition, published after the news of the battle of the 10th of December had reached England, related: "Somehow the place is alive with spies, and almost every day one or two are shot. Not much time is wasted with them. Once captured, they are brought in, tried by drumhead court-martial, and are almost invariably shot at once." All this was proof that the general who sanctioned these executions was a most capable officer, and would leave his mark on the records of the war. So he has. His measures of justice to alleged spies were the best recruiting agencies south of the Orange River for the Federal armies, and the men who were driven by such brutal and unwarranted military executions into the Boer commandoes from Cape Colony were among those who chased this great British general and his troops out of Stormberg and put an end to the English hope of a capture of Bloemfontein by the Gatacre genius and dash.

Around very few of the series of British "mishaps" in this war has the war correspondent's fertile inventiveness woven a greater number of plausible theories with which to account for a stagger-


NORTHEASTERN
CAPE COLONY
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
ORANGE FREE STATE
BASUTOLAND
CAPE COLONY
NIEUWEVELD
Plateau of Great Karroo
Karree Bergen
Carnarvon
Pampoen Poort
Praan Berg
Leeuwfontein
Victoria West
Slangfontein
Klipwal
Fraserburg
Nieuweveld Mts.
Beaufort West
Letjesbosch
Bolcksberg
Prince Albert
Blyde Berg
Willowmore
Nelspoort
Waaifontein
Murraysburg
Oudeburg
Graaff Reinet
Aberdeen
Tiger Berg
Klipdrift
Aberdeen Road
Jansenville
Beer Valley
Matjesfontein
Britstown
De Aar
Deelfontein
Richmond Road
Richmond
Hanover
Hanover Road
Plettenberg
Colesberg
Philipstown
Hout Kraal
Paauw Pan
Philippolis
Bethulie
Norvals Pont
Springfontein
Smithfield
Berseba
Carmel
Hebron
Rouxville
Herschel
Lady Grey
Aliwal North
Wittebergen
Ventersburg
Rietfontein
Burghersdorp
Albert Junction
Barkly East
Jamestown
Wodehouse
Dordrecht
Stormberg
Stormburg Jc.
Molteno
Steynsburg
Naauw Poort
Koran
Rosmead Jc.
Maraisburg
Sterkstroom
Lesseytown
Queenstown
Tarkastad
Cradock
Cathcart
Stokens Mountain
Seymour
Stutterheim
Kongha
Frankfort
Berlin
Alice
Ft. Beaufort
Aberdeen
King Williams Town
East London
Bedford
Glenlynden
Somerset East
Tonder
Pearston
Adendorp
Tandtjesberg
Nardouw
Babels Tower
Maijesfontein
New Bethesda
Hartebeest Kraal
Rosefontein
Middelburg
Wonderheuvel
Elandsheuwel
Scorpion Kraal
Compass Berg 8983
Kikvorsch Berg
Mt. Winterberg 7,800
Blyde Berg
Zack
Lake
Kruis
Vallei
Orange R.
Kraai R.
Stormbergen
Zekoe
Bothas Drift
Dwars
Orange
Kraai
Buffalo
Gonaro
Green
TO KIMBERLEY
TO BLOEMFONTEIN
TO PORT ELIZABETH
TO CAPETOWN
TO PORT ELIZABETH
TEMBULAND
TRANSKEI
INDIAN OCEAN

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ing defeat otherwise than how and why it was really inflicted, than that of Stormberg. The world was told of an unknown and difficult country to march over; a wild, dark night; a wretched road; overworked Tommies; too rigid discipline; treacherous guides; plans revealed to the Boers, and all the rest; all with the patent purpose of concealing the truth for a time which was bound to assert itself in the publication of the real facts some day. The circumstance that 700 British troops had been for six weeks in Stormberg itself, and had remained there until twenty-one days previous to the attack by Gatacre, and had built the very sangars and fortifications used by the Boers on the 10th of December, never found any mention in the English reports of the battle. These details were not interesting; they were all concealed from the public, so as to lessen the significance of the defeat, and to minimize the consequent injury to British military prestige.

Early in the month of October a correspondent of the (Cape Colony) "East London Despatch" visited the then British camp at Stormberg, and duly recorded his impressions of the soldiers who were garrisoned there, under Colonel Gordon's command, as follows:

"They have been actively exercised at scouting work, and report has it that they have been drilled into the most perfect efficiency. As nearly as I can gather, there are between 700 and 800 men in camp, including infantry, mounted infantry, artillery, Army Service Corps, Medical Corps, and either engineers or sappers. The surrounding country has been carefully examined, and, should hostilities suddenly break out, the Berks would be able to find their way everywhere. The disposal of guns and the ground plan of the camp is such that the situation, to all intents and purposes, is strongly fortified, and certainly the line cannot be turned to inimical advantage by the enemy while the Berks remain where they are."

This was the place and position which was so difficult for British forces to discover just twenty-one days after the Berkshire Regiment had retired on Gatacre's camp, seventeen miles south!

The British general had a choice of three roads for his movement on Stormberg from Molteno, and he selected the best one for his purpose. The old road, to the right, leaves the railway track after a mile from Molteno, and passes on three or four miles east of Stormberg, through some mountain gorges and kloefs, and continues to Burghersdorp. That route would have presented great difficulties in a night march, and would have made a "surprise" attack on the Boer positions impossible. The new road, constructed twenty years ago, runs almost straight from Molteno to Stormberg Junction, crossing the railway track twice in its course, and skirt-

ing for the last two miles the base of the hills on which General Ollivier and Commandant Swanepoll were posted with their men. This road would have been even more hazardous for the object of the midnight march of the English than the old road, as it passed in between two of the very ridges guarded by the Boers. The third way was by the main road from Molteno to Steynsburg, and for every object of Gatacre's purpose, strategical and otherwise, it was the best and only practicable route to take. When three miles outside of Molteno, it turns suddenly to the west, dipping south at the bend and sweeping round in a semicircle the farm of Klipfontein, approaching again to Stormberg, almost at right angles, and going within a mile of the railway station before bending west again, and then south, to Steynsburg. The farm of Klipfontein is southwest of the hills on which the burghers were placed, and it was on this farm where the English were themselves surprised, but not before they had reached within 500 yards of the ridge on which the Smithfield burghers were posted; a fact demonstrating that the troops had been well and accurately guided all the way. This route was three miles longer than the new or center road, owing to the semicircular détour round Klipfontein, and it is manifest that it was this extra distance by way of the longer and safer route for the advance from Molteno which tended to disarrange the plan for a surprise through the miscalculated time-duration of the march.

The story of the false guides is a pure invention, and only one of the many sorry expedients resorted to by the English war correspondent when a disaster has to be explained away in any or every manner which may for a time tend to disguise the ugly facts of a defeat. That Gatacre and his men should have reached their objective without observation disposes completely of the theory of treachery. As already pointed out, the whole locality of the Boer position was known to officers of Gatacre's staff, who had themselves been located at Stormberg for six weeks, and had actually built its fortifications. The extra guides selected for the column were Kaffir policemen of the Fingo and Tambu tribes, who were friendly to the English and hostile to the Boers, and who knew every inch of the road. There were only a few pro-Boers at Molteno, which was a strong English center, and it is the lunacy of absurdity to suppose that Gatacre dispensed with the services of his own officers and of the British Colonial Police in order to get a Boer sympathizer as a guide for his column on such an occasion. As a matter of fact, one of the Kaffir Police guides was killed in the fight by the Boer fire; the other fired on the Boers after the British had hoisted the white flag, and would have been shot had not General Ollivier saved his life, and sent him as a prisoner to Pretoria. Like a similar

story about treacherous guides at Nicholson's Nek, this one was invented with the object of hiding the ugly facts, which would tell a plain tale of crass stupidity on the part of British officers, and of panic and a white flag on the side of men who are trained to look to such officers for every order and direction in every contingency and situation in the soldier's disciplinary life, from barrack-room existence to the actualities of a battle-field.

The Boer forces at Stormberg when Gatacre's attack was delivered comprised 400 men of the Rouxville commando, under General Ollivier, and 350 men of the Smithfield burghers, under Commandant Swanepoll. Of the latter body, only sixty actually participated in the engagement all through; the others being some miles east of the hill guarding the left of the Boer positions against possible surprise by the old road to Burghersdorp. Swanepoll held the crest of the hill looking down upon the Klipfontein Farm. A hundred of those of his men who were eastward watching for the enemy's movements in that direction arrived after the enemy had been knocked into confusion by Ollivier's and Swanepoll's first attack, and only helped to drive the British back on their line of march.

West of Stormberg, a distance of nine miles, at a place called De Kop, on the road from the Junction to Steynsburg, the Burghersdorp (Colonial) contingent, 400 strong, was in laager, under Commandant P. A. Steenekamp. There were also 300 of the Bethulie commando in the same place, under Field Cornet Du Plooy, General Grobler being in chief command.

The four commandoes were in two divisions; the one in occupation of Stormberg being composed of the Rouxville and Smithfield burghers; and the other, at De Kop, comprising the Bethulie men and the Burghersdorp volunteers. The separation of the two laagers by that distance was the result of a quarrel as to which division should have the solitary gun, a Krupp twelve-pounder, in possession of the entire force; the Smithfield men claiming and holding it, whereupon the Burghersdorp and Bethulie burghers moved away nine miles nearer Steynsburg, where they were in laager, and asleep, when Gatacre's guns were heard in the early morning of the 10th of December at the Stormberg Junction.

A report of the differences between the two Boer laagers probably reached the British camp, and may have induced General Gatacre to plan the bold stroke for the 10th of December, which so signally failed when so near success. In any case, it was a movement which both military and political considerations fully justified the English general in planning. Stormberg was a very important position, standing as it did right across the line which was the shortest and

most direct route by rail from the coast to Bloemfontein. It was also near Burghersdorp, the chief center of active pro-Boer sympathy in the north of Cape Colony. A stunning blow delivered at such a spot, at that particular period, would have all but arrested the recruiting for the Federal armies which the ignominious failure of the attack only correspondingly stimulated.

On the night of December 9 the British column which was to surprise the Boers at Stormberg marched north from Molteno. The force consisted of Northumberland Fusiliers, Irish Rifles, mounted infantry, and Cape Mounted Rifles. There were also the men and guns of two batteries of field artillery and two Maxims; in all, close upon 3,000 troops, and fourteen guns. A local newspaper eulogist of the Gatacre division, who, by an intelligent anticipation of events, had heralded the preparations for this formidable expedition, added that "five special war correspondents" were to accompany the conquering column. There was, therefore, nothing left undone to inspire a confident anticipation of a brilliant British triumph.

The night was pitch dark, and thus favored the purposes of the first aggressive movement of Gatacre's force. The gun carriages were provided with muffled tires, and all other precautions against alarming the Boers too soon were taken. The road for three-fourths of the distance was well sheltered by ridges and kopjes against observation from the direction of the Junction, and, excepting the miscalculation as to distance, there had been no mistake in the march of the column.

During the last two miles of the journey the road, in approaching the Junction, passed near to a farm which, fortunately for the burghers who were asleep in their laagers ahead, possessed a dog. The animal barked at the passing troops and awoke two men, who, on looking out on the veldt, beheld the moving masses of Tommies. They rushed with their guns to a stone wall some 200 yards from the road, and opened fire into the rear of the column. Half the troops had passed on before this incident occurred. The sixty Smithfield burghers with their Krupp were on the crest of the hill about a mile away, to the right front of the column, and were aroused by the shooting. So were the Rouxville burghers further ahead, to the left, at the Junction, who rushed from their laager up the side of the same hill a little to the west, and placed themselves in position behind the fortifications built by the British soldiers when in possession of the ridge.

The Northumberlands were at the head of the column, and had passed on nearer to the Junction when the two Afrikanders had fired upon the Irish Rifles, who were near the rear. The front part

of the column was, therefore, only some 500 or 700 yards from Commandant Swanepoll's position on the top of the ridge when the two shots, ringing out their warnings in the morning air, told the tale of the enemy's stealthy advent right on to the farm at Klipfontein. On the Smithfield men firing down on the more or less massed Tommies, a panic was created; the belief obtaining among them that the shots from behind came from a large concealed force in that direction, and that the column had landed itself into a trap. The panic, however, did not last long. The true state of things in the rear was soon discovered, and the enemy's guns were brought

SERVICE OF THE SOLITARY BOER GUN AT STORMBERG VICTORY

up and trained upon the ridge to the right front, some 1,500 yards distance. This steadied the Britishers for a time, but, as they failed to secure any adequate cover, where, strange to say, an abundance of it obtained, the Mausers from the heights where the Rouxville men were now in secure position began to tell with terrible effect upon the enemy. Men dropped all round, while not a single Boer was visible at any point. It finally occurred to some of Gatacre's officers to attempt to get round the ridge by going a little west of the road, below where it bends sharply to the left and turns again due west to Steynsburg, and, by taking the road again after the turn, come on to the Junction from the direction of Steynsburg. Whoever thought of this movement must have been accurately informed of the topography of the place, and were it not for the rapid

riding of Du Plooy from De Kop, along this very road, the troops would have turned the position held by Ollivier, and probably have captured Stormberg.

What prevented this and saved the situation was the arrival on the scene of some of the Bethulie burghers. The guns at Stormberg were heard at De Kop, and the Burghersdorp and Bethulie men were roused with orders of "Opsal!" which soon saw them flying along the Steynsburg road; 50 of the Bethulie men, with Du Plooy at their head, galloping in advance, and arriving at the bend of the road west of the Junction just as the Northumberlands had reached the same point from across the Molteno branch of the same road. These Tommies were thrown into utter confusion by this unexpected encounter, and by the fierceness of the Bethulie men's assault. Finding themselves between two fires, and thinking, in the confusion and the semi-darkness of the early morning, that the 50 men were a bigger force, they hoisted the white flag and went through the unprecedented battle-field ceremony of surrendering their arms—8 officers and 300 men—to Commandant Du Plooy and his 50 burghers!

Some of the Bethulie and Burghersdorp burghers, coming on behind Du Plooy, had crossed from the Steynsburg to the Molteno road, below where the Northumberlands had surrendered, and attacked the Irish Rifles in the flank. This, together with the number of troops who had already been shot down, re-created the panic of the first contact with the Smithfield men, and Gatacre and his utterly broken column fled back to Molteno, pursued for five miles by the Burghersdorp men, who succeeded in capturing two of the enemy's Armstrong guns and an ammunition wagon on the way. These guns had been most clumsily handled in the fight, and were fired in the most disorderly manner; Colonel Eager being mortally wounded, along with several more of his men, by the wild fire of their own artillery. The solitary Boer Krupp, in charge of Sergeant Muller, had, on the other hand, played havoc with its shells down among the enemy during their confusion and flight. Had the whole of the Smithfield men been with the sixty burghers who were with this gun on the hill above the Klipfontein Farm, Gatacre's loss would have been much heavier in killed and wounded than it turned out to be.

What was absolutely astounding in the conduct of the British was their hopeless and helpless demoralization, even after the full light of the morning had revealed the true positions of their foes, and had shown Gatacre a choice of strong counter positions on the west side of the Molteno road, where the nature of the ground afforded ample cover. No stand worthy of the name was made

by the enemy after the white flag had been hoisted by the first batch of troops, and Du Plooy, who took their surrender, then dashed down the road and helped in the capture of the two Armstrongs with 150 men.

The actual Boer combatants in the fight numbered less than 800 men, and to these 618 soldiers and 14 officers surrendered, out of a total British force of near 3,000 troops. Gatacre's losses in killed and wounded were very slight in comparison with the loss in prisoners. He had 26 dead and 70 disabled, only.

The Boer casualties amounted to 4 killed and 13 wounded in General Ollivier's commando; 1 killed and 3 wounded of General Grobler's contingent (from De Kop), and Commandant Swanepoll, of the Smithfield burghers, slightly wounded; total, 5 killed and 17 wounded. With a loss of less than 25 men, 800 actual Boer combatants, out of a total force of 1,100, killed and wounded 96 of their enemies, captured 632, pursued over 2,000 more for several miles, and secured in the chase two guns which were abandoned by the flying column.

In an envelope addressed to a British resident at Stormberg and found on the battle-field, there was a letter which was to be forwarded to one of the English prisoners at Pretoria, which read as follows:

"*Dear Henry*—The Boers seem afraid of us. One good fight will demoralize them completely. In my opinion they have the courage of women, and can fight all right when they are safe themselves; and, when their courage fails, they have to resort to strategy."

Commandant Swanepoll wrote the following across the letter, and ordered it to be sent to its owner:

"I trust you will disillusion this lady now, as regards our courage. Very striking that on the very day the letter was addressed to you (10th December) the courageous English were hidden behind the rocks at Stormberg and taken prisoners. Do let the lady know that we were only a few hundred against 3,000."

GENERAL OLLIVIER

John Hendrik Ollivier, who took a prominent part in the infliction of this smashing blow on Gatacre, was 47 years old when the war broke out. He is of French origin, and was born at Rouxville, in the south of the Orange Free State. He was a wealthy farmer, and immensely popular with the burghers in that beautiful region of the Republic. Being a neighbor of the Basutos, whose lovely

country adjoins the district of Rouxville on the east, General Ollivier had acquired considerable influence over the former native allies of the English against the Boers. This influence was successfully utilized when war had been declared to counteract the British intrigues which attempted to incite the Basuto chiefs to harass the Free State frontier.

Ollivier is a very fine type of manhood, standing over six feet, athletically built, with a strong, handsome face, large black beard, and jovial expression. He had three sons fighting by his side at Stormberg. His grandfather had married three times, and left to the Boer nation a fine legacy of thirty-six children. His grandson, John Hendrik, like almost all the Boer generals, was a member of the Volksraad when hostilities began.

As with most other contentions and statements anent the Federal forces, various and conflicting estimates have been given of the number of Afrikanders who went over as combatants to the Boer side during the war. These estimates were based chiefly on sensational statements in the earlier stages of the conflict. It became necessary to account for the alleged presence of from "seventy to one hundred thousand Boers" and allies in the field in December, and, as not more than half these numbers could be found in the male population of the two Republics, auxiliaries from Cape Colony and Europe were thrown in by the exertions of a liberal imagination, in order to make up the conjectured Republican strength. "Ten thousand" volunteer and commandeered Afrikanders were declared by English and Colonial critics to have thus joined the Federal standards. In the light of the figures given below, and which are from a most reliable source, that of one of the chief organizers of these "rebels," this estimate is a great exaggeration. The number of actual combatants from each district in the north and northwest of Cape Colony, up to the date of the battle of Stormberg, were as follows:

Colesberg, town and district	150	men
Venterstad	120	"
Burghersdorp	480	"
Aliwal North, and Ladygrey	500	"
Barkly East and Dordrecht (district of Wodehouse)	550	"
Griqualand West, comprising Barkly West, and districts of Hay, Herbert, and Vryberg	1,000	"
Casual Afrikander volunteers . . .	500	"
	3,300	

About 2,000 more fighters could have been "commandeered" in the Steynsburg, Somerset East, Craddock, Middelburg, and other districts had these places been proclaimed. Boer sympathizers in Cape Colony and Natal wanted this kind of "coercion" as a justification for their enlistment. They were nominal British subjects, and unless their desire to help the Federals was assisted in this way they refused to volunteer. No such encouragement as that suspected was at first tendered by the Free State authorities to these potential allies across the Orange River. On the contrary, the tendency during the early weeks of the war was to prevent the combat from penetrating too far from the Free State border, and the conditions of proclamation and commandeering required by the political consciences of Cape Colony Afrikanders were only sanctioned in places and districts lying close to where the Free State expected its territory would be first attacked by the British.

JOHN HENDRIK OLLIVIER

The estimated number of casual volunteers (500) includes the men, chiefly young Afrikanders, who went over in small bodies from Steynsburg. Molteno, Middelburg, Somerset East, Craddock, and other places, without the stimulus of commandeering. The total number thus made up will come very near the actual figure where absolute accuracy is in the nature of things impossible. No record of these auxiliary forces exists, but the information upon which this statement of their numbers is based is obtained from sources which are most reliable. Subsequent to the victories of Colenso and Spion Kop, probably 700 or 1,000 more volunteers found their way over the Orange River. Griqualand West districts supplied the largest number of Afrikander allies of any portion of the Colony. The men from this locality fought with Cronje at Magersfontein, and joined De Wet when he assumed command of a section of the western forces. The volunteers from the Colesberg districts joined Schoeman's commandoes, while those from the more eastern localities of Burghersdorp, Aliwal North, Barkly East, and Wodehouse ranged themselves with Ollivier's army. Of Colonial Volun-

teers who may have joined Christian De Wet, following the disaster of Paardeberg, and Hertzog, George Brand, Kritzinger, Scheepers, Lotter, and other leaders subsequently, after Lord Roberts had issued his home-burning proclamation, no reliable data can yet be obtained. It is probable that the resort to British Weylerism brought 10,000 more Cape volunteers to the Boer commandoes during 1900-1901.

Chapter XXI

THE DASH ON ESTCOURT

LOUIS BOTHA RELIEVES GENERAL MEYER—BOTHA'S POPULARITY—HE GAINS JOUBERT'S CONSENT FOR RAID IN BRITISH TERRITORY—DERAILS ARMORED TRAIN AT BLAAUKRANTZ—CAPTURE OF WINSTON CHURCHILL—"HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE BOERS"—DAVID JOUBERT WITH ONE THOUSAND MEN JOINS BOTHA—BRITISH FALL BACK TO ESTCOURT—ENGAGEMENT AT MOOI RIVER (WILLOW GRANGE OR BEACON HILL)—BRITISH KILL MORE BRITISH THAN BOERS—BOTHA'S REPORT—A "TIMES" CORRESPONDENT ON DEVASTATION BY THE BOERS—GENERAL PIET JOUBERT'S DISGUST AT RAIDING CHARACTER OF THE EXPEDITION—HE LEAVES BOTHA TO OPPOSE BULLER AND RETIRES TO INVEST LADYSMITH

I RETURN again to the progress of events in Natal.

General Lukas Meyer obtained leave of absence a week after the engagement at Modderspruit, owing to illness brought on by the fatigues of the campaign, and Louis Botha was selected as a temporary Commandant of the Southeastern Transvaal forces. This appointment gave general satisfaction to the burghers. They had been quick to discern the capable qualities of the man who had shown such skill in handling men at Modderspruit, and whom they believed to be, tho holding but a subordinate position, the military brains-carrier of that brief but glorious campaign. He had already won confidence all round by the clearness of his views and the intrepidity of his actions, and his promotion to the command in question became exceedingly popular, especially among the younger and more ardent Boers.

The choice thus made was not long in proving itself worthy of the popular recognition it obtained. Botha infused a more aggressive fighting spirit into the men under his control. He had no power to overrule the decision of Joubert, backed as this was by President Kruger, to sit down before Ladysmith, but he resolved to exercise what authority he possessed in the task of forcing the fighting elsewhere.

He at once prepared a flying column for a dash towards the advancing British at and below Colenso, with the double object of showing the Afrikanders as far as Maritzburg the resolute confidence of the Transvaal levies, and to inflict such punishment

upon the enemy in his own country as the fortunes of the contemplated raid might enable him to do.

Joubert was got to consent to this proposed reconnaissance in force, and resolved to accompany it; more, it was believed, with the object of restraining the ardor of the column and its commander than from any belief in the wisdom of the too daring adventure.

The British had occupied and fortified the river banks at Colenso before the declaration of war. Two forts had been built, one commanding the railway, and the other the wagon bridge which spanned the stream, and these were held by some Natal troops and Fusiliers. An advanced patrol of Free Staters, under Commandant De Villiers, engaged a body of the Colenso garrison a few miles north of the village on the 7th of November, and drove them back upon their main body. Colonel Cooper, who was in command of the troops in the place, believing he was about to be attacked by a large force, retired from his position and fell back on General Hildyard's camp at Estcourt. The evacuation was carried out under cover of the night, the enemy retreating in a panic.

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LOUIS BOTHA

On the 14th of November the invading column marched south from Colenso. Joubert and Botha were now between two English armies; one near 12,000 strong, in Ladysmith, and the other, supposed to be 20,000 strong, moving towards them from Durban to Estcourt, and to be, within the brief space of ten days, under the immediate orders of the Commander-in-Chief, who was to eat his Christmas dinner in Pretoria—according to the boasts of the Jingo authors of the war. It was in every sense a daring and dashing exploit thus to leave a formidable army in the rear, held in check only by a few thousand farmers, and to push forward into the very heart of the enemy's country in face of an advancing army six times numerically stronger in men and guns than Botha's commando. But the Boer general knew his men and the country thoroughly. Greytown, where he had lived when young, was near

Estcourt, and the Johannesburg Police, the Wakkerstroom, Ermelo, Krugersdorp, Vryheid, and Free State burghers were in their saddles, as cool and as brave a body of mounted men as ever rode against an advancing foe.

The commando encumbered itself with very little baggage. It was organized for purposes of the swiftest movements, and all impediments were discarded. Two pom-poms, a Creusot fifteen-pounder, and a seven-pound Krupp were the only guns it was safe to take away from the siege of Ladysmith. The column was equipped so that nothing could hamper its mobility during the ten days' foray in the center of Natal which had been decided upon.

On the day after the start south from Colenso an armored train was observed engaged in running from Estcourt to Chieveley and back, on reconnaissance purposes, and it was determined to lay a trap for the "mobile fort" and effect its capture. Botha arranged his plans for this purpose as follows: On the morning of the 15th a hundred of the Wakkerstroom commando were posted on the side of a high cutting through which the railway line north to Colenso and Ladysmith passes, near Frere. Another force was concealed two miles lower down the line, with instructions to allow the train to pass them unmolested towards the ridges where the first body were posted, who had orders to attack it. These dispositions made, the train was in due course seen steaming northward. It consisted of three armored trucks, two ordinary carriages, and some wagons. The engine pushed the train along, so that in the event of danger it might the more easily run back to Estcourt.

The first body of ambushed Boers permitted it to pass and to proceed on to the ridge, where a Mauser fire was at once opened upon it. This brought it to a standstill, and the men in charge turned a Maxim upon their assailants. The contest lasted a few minutes only, when the officer in charge of the train ordered the driver to steam back to Estcourt.

Meanwhile the Boers in the rear of the train had displaced a rail in the line, and on reaching this spot the front trucks jumped the track and brought the train to a stand. The occupants were now fired upon by the second force of Boers, and a lively engagement took place. Some of the troops in the train defended themselves with spirit, while others were employed in trying to replace the derailed trucks on the track. After firing had gone on for an hour, the locomotive and two of the carriages got free, and started for Estcourt, leaving the dismantled portion of the train behind, with 2 men killed, 10 wounded, and 56 prisoners.

Mr. Winston Churchill was found to be one of the occupants of the train. He claimed that he was a non-combatant, and ought not to be taken prisoner. He took no part whatever in defending the train.

The official report of the encounter with the train, and of the capture of Mr. Churchill, appeared in the following terms in the Boer press:

"Pretoria, Monday (Special).—Mr. Winston Churchill declares that at the time of his capture, near Estcourt, he was armed only with a reporter's note-book and pencil. He was busy recording impressions of armored-train warfare and its effects on modern formations, when the ironclad on wheels was derailed, and hurled him and 56 others into space. He was hopelessly involved with Jack Tars, regulars, and volunteers in the 'mêlée,' and was slightly wounded in the hand.

"The Government is considering representations made on his behalf, and it is believed that his enforced detention is only temporary."

Apropos of Mr. Winston Churchill's arrest and subsequent escape from Pretoria, and the various dramatic accounts which have been published of that exploit, the following correspondence may not be without some interest:

"From Churchill, to Editor 'Standard and Diggers' News.'

"Am now writing 'How I Escaped from the Boers'; but regret cannot, for obvious reasons, disclose many interesting details. Shall be happy to give you any you may require when next I visit Pretoria, probably third week in March."

"The 'Standard and Diggers' News' has been honored by Mr. Winston Churchill's evident desire to become a contributor to its columns, where, in about the third week of March, he would relate his experiences under the title of 'How I Escaped from the Boers.' We are sorry indeed to have to disappoint so promising a youth; but unless Mr. Churchill can offer something much more interesting to the general public, we must decline the promised contribution. Mr. Churchill is a very young man who has his way to make in the world, and we would, from our maturer experience, venture to suggest that it would be advisable to bear in mind the old adages, 'A still tongue makes a wise head,' 'Least said, soonest mended.' And to demonstrate to our journalistic fledgling the true appreciation of his particular desire we would recommend that he alter the title of his lucubration to 'How I Was Allowed to Escape from the Boers,' a precis of which would read: A moonlight night, easy-going guards, Netherlands Railway Station. A coal truck. Ressano Garcia Station. Begrimed and miserable object. Arrived at Lourenzo Marquez. Admittance to British Consulate. Departure by French steamer. Typewritten telegrams. And the key

to the whole : Scene : Pretoria War Office : 9 a.m., Mr. Churchill reported missing; orders of arrest issued to police authorities. 11 a.m., Receipt of official letter by morning's mail from Commandant-General Joubert, ordering release of Mr. Churchill as non-combatant. Orders to police authorities not to execute warrant of arrest."

In a letter addressed to Mr. De Souza, Secretary to the War Office at Pretoria, and left on his bed in the Model Schools in which he had been detained, Mr. Churchill stated that, being a non-combatant press correspondent, he considered his detention unjustified and had decided to escape. He expressed his keen

Mr. Churchill

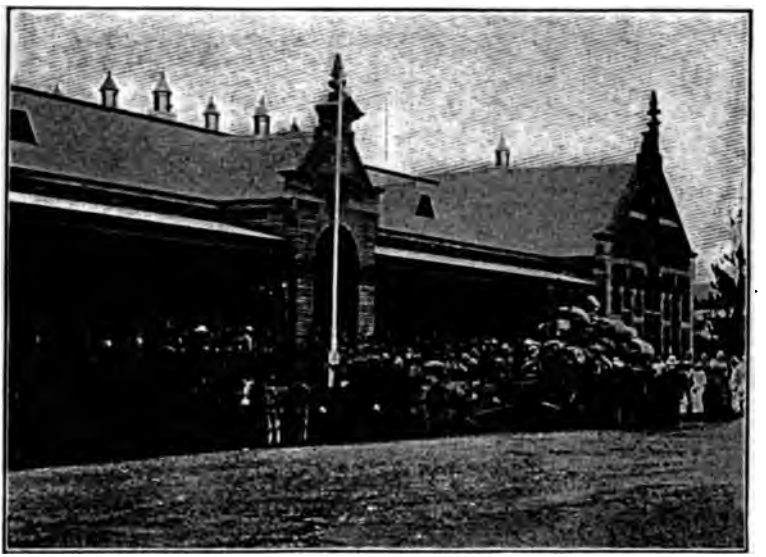
WINSTON CHURCHILL, WITH OTHER PRISONERS OF WAR, AT PRETORIA

appreciation for the kind treatment shown to him and his fellow-prisoners by the authorities, and said further that, on reaching the British lines, he would give a true and impartial report of his experiences while here. He concluded by expressing his admiration for the humane and chivalrous conduct of the Republican forces.

After the adventure with the armored train at Blaaukrantz, the column proceeded by a circuitous route towards the west through the hills, and climbed a ridge of the Drakensberg which commanded the English lines in and around their fortified camp at Estcourt. Information was soon obtained from friendly sources as to the exact strength of the enemy, number of guns, and probable plans. There were 8,000 troops commanding the approaches by the Ladysmith road, and some 4,000 more in the vicinity of Est-

court at Mooi River, with batteries which included several naval guns.

David Joubert, of Carolina, nephew of the Commandant-General, with 1,000 men, had swept eastward from Frere as far as Weenan, where he hoisted the Vierkleur, and then marched south to Mooi River, between Estcourt and Maritzburg. The main division, under Botha, moved westward to White Mountain, and passed Estcourt, joining hands with the smaller column, about ten miles due south of the British forces. The English army was now cut off from its base, and consternation was created in Durban;



SCHOOL BUILDING AT PRETORIA, WHERE BRITISH PRISONERS WERE KEPT

some of the citizens being reported as seeking safety on board some ships in the harbor. Botha took up positions at the Mooi River which were a challenge to the English general for a combat south of his headquarters, but the challenge was declined. The location of the Boer force was reconnoitered by some of Hildyard's troops, and they refused battle on seeing the burghers prepared to meet them. They fell back again on Estcourt.

The English were very strongly entrenched here behind prepared positions, on a circle of surrounding hills. Naval guns were placed on the kopjes commanding the approaches by the Ladysmith road, and the town was deemed to be impregnable to attack from the north. Yet, despite this circumstance, and the fact that General

Hildyard must have been aware of the relative weakness of Joubert's column, he refused to fight until compelled to do so by the menacing action of the Boers in actually raiding the country south of the British general's camp.

On Tuesday, November 22, and early on the morning of the 23rd, an engagement, variously called that of Mooi River, Willow Grange, and Beacon Hill, was fought seven miles south of Estcourt, which has been claimed as a victory by both sides.

General Hildyard's report says:

"It was not my intention to remain in the position, a course which would have entailed a division of forces at Estcourt. The rôle of the supporting troops was, therefore, restricted to covering the withdrawal of the assaulting battalions. Most of the losses occurred during the retirement; they were chiefly in the 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, which was the last regiment to retire. . . . The troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Martyn, after holding a party of some 300 Boers south of Willow Grange, moved to the support of Colonel Kitchener's left flank, where they did valuable service in keeping back the enemy and assisting to get the wounded of the 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment down the hill."

This language is, clearly enough, the language of British "victories" as "she is wrote" in the English records of the South African War, but it does not in any sense bear out the case put forward by General Buller in his despatch in support of Hildyard's claim of a victory for his army.

General Hildyard's report is significantly silent upon one very serious incident in the attack on Beacon Hill, an incident which has been repeated in connection with British bungling in several subsequent battles.

The hill was scaled by men of the Yorkshires and East Surreys, in pitch darkness, during the night of the 22nd, and, for a time, in a frightful storm of hail and lightning. Some men of the East Surrey Regiment, moving round an angle of the hill, came suddenly upon troops which they believed to be Boers, and immediately opened fire upon the supposed enemy at close quarters. About a dozen of the Yorkshire men fell before the rifles of their comrades, and, as Boer accounts show, the British actually killed more of their own men than of their enemies in the "great victory" at Willow Grange.

General Botha's report of the battle is as follows:

"We located a big force of British troops around Estcourt and Mooi River, on fortified positions, with plenty of artillery.

"We combined with the Free State commando and a squadron of the Johannesburg Mounted Police on the 22nd, and advanced on the British position towards Mooi River, amidst fearful weather.

"During a heavy thunder-storm one Free Stater and six horses were killed by lightning.

"Shortly after, great activity was observed among the enemy's troops, who stormed a mountain battery held by the Free Staters, under heavy rifle fire, with great losses.

"The infantry was about 2,000 strong.

"On reaching the top they gave loud 'Hurrahs!' and yelled. 'Majuba is now wiped out,' while we maintained a heavy and steady fire on them.

"We had two men killed at this stage.

"Meanwhile the Rand Police and the Free Staters had retired in the direction of the Krugersdorp commando, while reenforcements were sent for.

"These turned up in the shape of a strong commando and artillery, personally led by Commandant-General Joubert, who occupied a splendid position close by, and opened fire.

"Under cover of his guns we re-formed with the Free Staters and the Police, and stormed the position held by the English troops, and drove them off, with apparent heavy loss. They retreated in disorder towards Estcourt.

"The engagement was very hot.

"Ambulance reports to me were that the British losses were 120 killed and wounded.

"Our losses were one killed and four wounded—Krugersdorp men.

"My horse was shot under me."

The London "Times" of the 7th of December published the following letter from an Englishman in Natal which tends to confirm the Boer claim, and strongly to deny that put in in favor of a British triumph at Willow Grange:

"For four days a small force of Boers held a track of country with a frontage roughly 25 miles either way, and held it at their leisure, raiding cattle, driving about with traps and horses, mule-wagons, etc., picking up what they wanted; killing time buck shooting and guinea-fowl shooting—all this with 13,000 British troops within eight or ten miles of their main camp on either side of them.

"The Boers, during their occupation here, did no damage to occupied property, but have utterly wrecked all homesteads that had been vacated. By this time our troops had been reenforced to about 18,000 men (Mooi River and Estcourt combined), the Boers were traveling with a convoy eight miles long with men whose maximum speed is three miles an hour; two-thirds of our

force was ahead of them in the direction they were supposed to be taking, and eventually did take; the remaining one-third was only 12 miles behind their rear column, which could hardly have got under weigh when my message got to camp. The Boers had to pass out of a deep valley some 24 miles in length, with very steep hills on either side—that's the position—and yet our general let this Boer army, convoy and all, get out on to the main road beyond Estcourt, cross the Tugela at Colenso, and blow up the bridge behind them."

After the battle of the 23rd the Boer column moved leisurely on its way back to Colenso, where it arrived after a ten days' most successful reconnaissance; Hildyard making no attempt to follow. The casualties in the fights with the armored train and near Estcourt were less than a dozen, while the enemy had suffered to the extent of over 100 killed and wounded, and of 50 prisoners.

General Joubert returned from the raid in a gloomy spirit. He openly regretted having participated in it. It was not his method of fighting. Some horses were taken from pro-English farmers, 6,000 head of cattle were captured, and other things were commandeered contrary to his instructions and ideas. This angered the old general more than it ought to have done, and when asked on his return to the laager at Ladysmith what he thought of the results of the reconnaissance, his reply was:

"Ja, die Engelschen zal zeg: 'Heir was Joubert langs met zyn roovers bende.'" *

Botha, with his characteristic generosity, gave Joubert the credit of having personally led the reenforcements which enabled a successful assault to be made on the enemy at Willow Grange, but the Commandant-General was little more than a passive spectator of the fight. He either felt that he was being forced to engage in methods of warfare which were not to his liking, or that he had neither the military capacity nor the energy to direct a great army of 30,000 men engaged in what was, in comparison with the War of Freedom, a gigantic conflict, and he became dispirited. On the other hand, Louis Botha's masterful character, great energy, and natural genius, the spirit and dash with which he carried out his plans, joined to his growing popularity among the burghers, all impressed Joubert with the conviction that the younger man was the man whom the army required to lead it. This conviction was forced upon his mind during the raid, and it remained there afterward. He left to General Botha the task of barring Buller's way at the Tugela, and retired himself to the task

* "The English will say: 'Here was Joubert with a band of robbers.'"

of watching the working of his pet, but fatal, plan of keeping 6,000 or 7,000 burghers wasting ammunition, food, and time in the all but fruitless siege of Ladysmith.

On the return from the reconnaissance to Estcourt his horse stumbled while crossing some very rough ground, and caused a hurt to be inflicted from which he did not recover before his death. His end came in Pretoria, March 27, 1900, one month after the withdrawal of the Boers from the investment of Ladysmith, on the capture of which place the old hero had set his whole heart, and, as it were, staked his very life.

FUNERAL OF COMMANDANT-GENERAL PIET JOUBERT, IN PRETORIA

Chapter XXII

BATTLE OF COLENSO

BULLER ADVANCES TO RELIEF OF LADYSMITH—BOTHA WITHDRAWS TO NORTH BANK OF THE TUGELA—BRITISH EXAGGERATION OF STRENGTH OF BOER POSITION—DISPOSITION OF BOER FORCES—SPECTACULAR ADVANCE OF BRITISH—THEIR RECEPTION AT LANGWANI—THE REPULSE AT THE BRIDLE DRIFT—HILDYARD'S DIVISION BEATEN BACK AT CENTER—BRAVE BUT FATAL RALLY OF HART'S BRIGADE—BOERS CAPTURE COLONEL LONG'S BATTERIES—BOTHA'S REPORT OF THE BATTLE—IMPORTANCE OF THE VICTORY.

GENERAL BULLER reached Natal on the 25th of November, and lost no time in ordering an advance of all the forces he could collect to the relief of Ladysmith. The plan of operations which he was compelled to adopt to this end was not the plan of campaign which he had contemplated being able to carry out. The Orange Free State, rather than Natal, had been the way which he had intended to take to Pretoria. It was the line of advance marked out by all the military critics, and by general anticipation, as the most favorable for the British forces to follow. The English Commander-in-Chief found himself, therefore, forced to face a situation which had been the result of the political and military blunders committed in North Natal, and which rendered the relief of General White and his beleaguered garrison in Ladysmith the paramount undertaking of the moment. All other plans but this one had to be put on one side, and the British general faced the task thus forced upon him with determined promptness.

Meanwhile Botha had withdrawn his commandoes to the north of the Tugela. He lost no time in making ready for the attack which was to be delivered by his antagonist. The railway bridge had been destroyed; the wagon bridge over the river being left intact, with care taken to have its approaches from the Colenso side commanded from well-selected positions on the northern bank.

From the 30th of November until the eve of the battle the opposing forces were virtually in sight of each other, the British tents between Frere and Chieveley being visible from the kopjes to the north of the river, where the positions of Botha's burghers could be easily seen from the level country south of Colenso. In fact, General White, fourteen miles in Botha's rear, was able to

communicate with General Buller at Chieveley, eight miles south of Colenso, by flash-light at night and heliograph by day, so that Botha and his force were almost midway between two British armies having a combined strength of 33,000 men, and, at least, 12 batteries of artillery.

Colenso itself, which has given a name to one of the most disastrous battles for the English in the war, is a little village with only a dozen houses, and stands a few hundred yards south of the river, in the direction of Chieveley. Chieveley is some eight miles further south, on the railway line to Estcourt, the veldt rising a little from the river in a slope upward for about three miles, when it dips again on nearing Chieveley. Between Colenso and the river the ground is level and is covered, but not thickly, with clumps of mimosa trees and other scrubby plants. These trees, however, offered no effective shelter for the attacking army, as the kopjes overlooking the Tugela dominated the entire ground from the river outward, on to hills around Chieveley.

The Tugela near Colenso is a steep-banked river 150 yards wide, and was about four feet in water at the time of the battle. It was crossed by two bridges, a railway and a wagon bridge—about three-quarters of a mile apart—the former being destroyed by Botha after Buller had advanced from Estcourt, leaving the latter as the only structural means of passage from the south to the north side.

There was, however, a bridle drift some three or four miles to the west of the wagon bridge, fordable when the river was not in flood. These two vulnerable points were carefully and, as the sequel showed, adequately guarded in the plan of defense which Botha had prepared after his return from the reconnaissance to Estcourt.

The northern bank of the Tugela at Colenso offered no such formidable obstacle to General Buller as his own and the British war correspondents' descriptions would indicate. There is a consistent exaggeration of the natural strength of the positions held by Botha's small army in all the English reports of the battle; the obvious purpose being to magnify the difficulties which General Buller had to face in a fight which proved so disastrous to his own generalship and to the prestige of the British army. In all the accounts of this war, positions are made formidable or otherwise as a general required them to appear in reporting a victory or a reverse. In explaining the military considerations which induced General White to remain at Ladysmith, after his failure to arrest Joubert's march southward, rather than to fall back on the Tugela, Lord Roberts (South African Despatches, Vol. II., p. 13) wrote: "As Sir George White explains in his despatch, the

Tugela, at that time of the year, was not a formidable defensive obstacle." Yet, when General Botha held this same river at Colenso with 5,000 Boers against General Buller and 23,000 British, it became, in the military view of all the British generals and all the war correspondents, one of the most formidable positions which English troops could possibly face.

Botha's lines were undoubtedly strong, but more through the ability with which he had planned their defense than from the natural advantages which they offered to his small force. The two photographic views on the following pages will enable the reader, who may have read General Buller's despatch, or some

BOER TRENCH NEAR THE BRIDLE DRIFT—BATTLE OF COLENSO

other English account of the battle, to contrast the actual scene of the battle-field of Colenso, drawn by the sun, with the picture of "mountains," hills, and kopjes which figured in the descriptive details of British chroniclers of the engagement. Behind (north of) the river, at a distance of four or five miles, a high range of hills bar the way to Ladysmith, but these mountains were not occupied by the Boers in the fight at Colenso. They offered a strong defensive line to fall back upon, in the event of a reverse at the river, but they were otherwise of no advantage to Botha in the battle of the 15th of December. These hills, however, are represented in most of the English pictures of the battle-field as "the formidable positions" which General Buller attempted to storm and carry with his troops!

The Tugela at Colenso, as all along its course, flows in a zigzag

channel, the banks on both sides being somewhat serrated in their formation. The land on both the north and south sides falls abruptly to the level of the bed of the stream, and, while this fact, coupled with the width of the river opposite the village, would expose a force endeavoring to cross to great disadvantage during the attempt, on the day of the battle there was no such insuperable obstacle either in the depth of the river or in the nature of its banks as has been so graphically described in the British version of the fight, a fact which will be proved conclusively in the story of the engagement.

The hog-backed hill seen immediately north of the broken bridge in picture No. 1 was "Fort Wylie" in the accounts of the fight. It was deeply trenched on the top and on both sides, which work, however, was done by the English when in occupation of Colenso in October and the early part of November. The character of these fortifications will be noted in the view of the west side of Fort Wylie in picture No. 2.

Botha's center extended from Fort Wylie to the wagon bridge, about a mile west from the railway bridge. On Fort Wylie he placed men of the Krugersdorp commando, under Field Cornet Van Wyk, and Vryheiders (Botha's own commando), under his brother-in-law, Cherrie Emmet. These men lined the trenches on the sides and the top of the hill overlooking the river. The Heidelberg commando came next in position, westward. Next to these, and about midway between the two bridges, Acting-Commandant Oosthuizen, of Krugersdorp, and Field Cornet Kemp were posted on a round ridge, with another picked body of riflemen. Near this latter position Pretorius had two quick-firing Krupp guns. It was from the right of his center, near the positions held by Oosthuizen, that Botha directed the operations of his small army.

His right extended further west from the wagon bridge to the bridle drift, three miles down the river. The Tugela, near this point, forms a bend north of a complete half circle, the drift being near this bend. Entrenchments were dug each side of the bend, a little back from the banks, so as to place any force attempting to ford the river between a cross-fire. The Swaziland commando, under Christian Botha, and a force of Zoutpansberg burghers held the left-hand side of the bend, while the Johannesburg and Boxburg men, under Ben Viljoen, lined the opposite side. North of these, on the Ladysmith road, the Middelburg men and the Free Staters were posted, to guard against any attempted turning movement west of Viljoen's position. They took no active part in the fight. Northeast of these, some 5,000 yards back from

NO. 1.—BATTLE OF COLENSO, DECEMBER 15, 1899. POSITION OF THE BOER CENTER

(Fort Wylie is behind the broken railway bridge)

the river, two fifteen-pound Creusot guns were placed, which commanded the river front from the wagon bridge to the bridle drift.

The left wing of Botha's lines extended to Langwani Hill, about four miles east of Fort Wylie. This hill is on the south side of the Tugela, and was therefore detached from the main line of Boer defense. The river at this point turns sharply north and cuts the range, separating Langwani from the parent formation north of the river. This commanding hill was the key of the positions on the Tugela at Colenso, and had General Buller's tactical capacity enabled him to recognize this fact, and to have ordered his plan of battle with the turning and capture of Langwani as his first and governing operation, instead of making a frontal attack on the Boer left and center, Botha's position between the two bridges would have been rendered untenable.

Colonel Villebois-Mareuil has mentioned in his diary that it was he who drew General Botha's attention to the vital importance of securing Langwani against a possible plan of attack, such as its position would invite from any force strong enough to carry the hill, and ably led. This may be the correct explanation of the Boer general's precautions, tho he claims credit to himself for having foreseen the strategical value of the hill, and it is almost impossible to imagine so capable a general as Botha has shown himself to be overlooking in any sense the vital necessity of holding Langwani so as to cover and secure his left flank from the certain attack to which it would be open from there.

A dramatic incident in connection with this position forms part of the story of Colenso. With Colonel Villebois-Mareuil as a spectator of the battle was another French officer, Lieutenant Galapaud, of the 9th Chasseurs, who acted as military correspondent to "Le Matin," of Paris. He wrote a brief account of the great Boer victory, and embodied in his report Villebois-Mareuil's view of the vital value of Langwani to any attempt on the part of Buller to cross the Tugela at or near Colenso. This view appeared in the "Matin" early in February, and the next—that is, the fifth—attempt of Buller to reach Ladysmith was made with Langwani Hill as the pivotal point in his plan of operations, and was successful. So convinced was General Botha that Buller had been advised by cable of the opinion thus expressed within the Boer lines, that he caused the following letter to be published in the Boer press:

"Sir—In your issue of the 29th of March last there appears a translation of an extract from a description of the battle of Colenso, which took place on the 15th of December, 1899, and which was published in February last in the French paper 'Le Matin.' . . . The extract reads: 'An important point, and where

the main attack was expected, was the Langwani Hill, on the southern bank of the Tugela, which was occupied by only some 800 Boers, who were, however, selected from the best shots. Had the British made themselves masters of this position, they would have commanded all the Boer positions on the flank. A couple of British cannon there would mean a flight to us, and a victory to the British. As they were unacquainted with the weakness of this position, we watched it with the greatest anxiety.'

"In February this report was published in the Paris newspaper by some one who knew of the weak points of our position in this hill, and it was not till the 11th of that month that Buller made his attack upon the position, which he had formerly and for some time afterward carefully avoided, as witness Spion Kop, Pont Drift, etc.

"I wish, therefore, through the medium of your paper, to impress most seriously upon correspondents the great need of caution in the furnishing of reports, so that the possibility of advantage being thereby afforded to the enemy may be entirely excluded. I am, etc., C. SANDBERG, Military Secretary and Adjutant of the Act. Com.-General. Smaldeel, 5th April, 1900."

Eight hundred men, made up of Wakkerstroom burghers, with lesser proportions of crack shots from the Utrecht, Standerton, Zoutpansberg, and Ermelo commandoes, were entrenched on Langwani, under the joint command of Joshua Joubert and Commandant Swart, two most capable officers who had already distinguished themselves for capacity and bravery. This body of picked men had one Maxim gun, and no other artillery of any kind. The river bank between Langwani and Fort Wylie was not entrenched, but was watched by the forces at Botha's center. Any attempt on the enemy's part to effect a crossing between the center and left wings would have exposed both his flanks to a destructive fire.

In the dip of the ground behind Botha's center, men of several commandoes were in reserve awaiting the development of the enemy's attack, and available for emergencies. Among these were some of the Johannesburg Police, under Pohlman, and a few men of Blake's Irish Brigade, who had come from the lines around Ladysmith to assist in the defense of the Tugela positions.

The guns, numbering two fifteen-pound Creusots, two quick-firing seven-pound Krupps, and two pom-poms—one irregular battery—were distributed over the lines from the kopje near the wagon bridge to the hill north of the bridle drift, on the wagon road to Ladysmith, Captain Pretorius being in chief charge. There were no guns on Fort Wylie, despite the number of times they were

"silenced" there, in the English reports, by Buller's batteries. This strong position was held exclusively by riflemen.

Every preparation having been made for the coming battle, the order was given by Botha that no response of any kind should be made to the enemy's artillery until the actual assault by his infantry should be delivered. Not a shot was to be fired by gun or Mauser, no light was to be shown at night, nor movement of men by day, that could reveal to English ears or eyes at what place in the seven miles of defensive Boer positions, from Langwani to the bridle drift, guns or men would be ready for the final challenge to the possession of the way to Ladysmith. Confident in the strength of his position, and in the determination and capacity of his small force to stop effectively the English at Colenso and to turn them back, Botha awaited the onset of his antagonist.

At one o'clock on the morning of the 15th of December scouts brought word to General Botha's tent that the enemy were about to advance. The whole laager was alert in a few moments, and final orders were given to the various officers who were to be in immediate command at the anticipated points of attack. The morning was beautifully clear, with a cloudless South African sky, as the men from Botha's laager, with bandoliers well filled and Mausers charged, took up their allotted positions behind the Tugela. Away south at Chieveley the countless lights of the enemy's camp could be seen, as the British were preparing their forward movement. Gradually these lights began to fade as the brightening dawn stole across the Zululand border, and eager eyes scanned the far-stretching veldt in anxious watchfulness for the active foe. The hours moved slowly, as it seemed, until the fuller light of the awakened day revealed the forward lines of Buller's army marching steadily over the intervening plain. The whole of the enemy's forces could be clearly seen when, at about five o'clock, they began to take the form of well-defined columns of huge proportions, four or five miles south of the village; three of the divisions swinging in the direction of the Boer left, center, and right, along the river.

The scene, as viewed from the threatened kopjes behind the river, was one of unparalleled attraction, as the sun peeped over the eastern hills and sent its rays down upon the embattled British legions proudly marching on their way to the combat. There would be death to many, possibly defeat to all, in that huge disproportionate array of England's might and military pride, now sweeping on in majestic motion, like a resistless flood, over the resounding veldt. It was war in all its spectacular glory, as seen from where the little force of warrior farmers and beardless

× Where the British guns were taken

NO. 2.—BATTLE OF COLENSO, DECEMBER 15, 1899

(Battle-field beyond Fort Wylie)

boys behind the Tugela gazed with fascinated but fearless eyes, upon the wondrous living picture of 20,000 marching men; and war with all its horrors to the fathers and sons of families who looked upon these thousands of their country's foes whom they must in a few moments meet in the shock of deadly strife.

Suddenly there came from the Boer positions a deep volume of thrilling sound, rolling, as it were, like peals of muffled thunder down from the hills, on towards the river, along which it swept as if in echoing response to some chant of giants from the mountain tops behind, and then died away, leaving a more deathlike stillness in the morning air. It was the morning hymn of the Boer camp; the invocation of Divine help for the cause of "Land un Volk," sung by the older burghers as, rifle in hand, and hearts and minds set on victory, they stood ready to do or die for Transvaal freedom.

"General, the enemy is about to attack! Where are your men?" The speaker was Colonel Villebois-Mareuil, who had ridden rapidly from his tent behind the laager to where Louis Botha was standing, midway between the two bridges, glass to eyes, intently looking at the movements of the British troops as they were beginning to separate into independent columns.

"All right, Colonel," smilingly replied the Boer general. "Buller will find my men in their places, at the right time, have no fear!"

It was to be Louis Botha's day; a day forever memorable in the annals of true military renown, and no general ever looked more confident of victory than did the handsome young farmer as he stood there in the early morning facing his foes with men into whom he had infused his own dauntless spirit and cool determination.

In a few moments a cloud of smoke puffed forth from the rising ground between Chieveley and Colenso, and ten guns of Buller's batteries had opened the fray in a cannonade upon the Boer center. Fort Wylie was the objective of the enemy's artillery, and lyddite shells and shrapnel commenced to pound the river bank and the surrounding ground. The half-formed columns of the advancing troops seemed to pause in their movement to note the effects of their artillery fire. The guns continued to roar their thunderous challenge to the sunlit kopjes 7,000 yards away, but there was no response. The echoes of the naval battery reverberated over the plain, and up among the hills beyond the Tugela, but no sound came back from the belabored entrenchments to indicate the presence there of a solitary foeman or a single gun. All was still in front and beyond the river. Neither sign nor sound

gave any evidence of life or motion where, like a tiger crouching in his lair ready for the deadly spring at an approaching elephant, the little burgher army awaited the coming nearer of Britain's hosts.

For half an hour the enemy's guns played upon the center of Botha's position, and then the English right wing, screened by a large force of mounted infantry and cavalry, swung to the east, and went straight for Langwani. This was Barton's and Dundonald's division, and was accompanied by a battery of field artillery. Simultaneously another division of the enemy, composed

LANGWANI HILL—BATTLE OF COLENSO

of infantry, and estimated by Botha to be 4,000 strong, also with artillery, swept southward from Buller's center column, and directed its course for the bridle drift, where Botha's right lay concealed.

The first contact came from Langwani. The enemy's horsemen, in advance of the infantry, trotted across the veldt as if engaged in a riding parade over Salisbury Plain. On they came, halted; a few shots from some Armstrongs at the hill ahead, with no reply; then another move forward, in careless, almost close, formation. Then, when at about 200 yards distance from the base of Langwani, a murderous hail of lead belched forth, sudden as lightning, and swept the first line of riders out of their saddles. Again and again the shots rang out from somewhere in front—from exactly where could not be seen—and the entire column was hurled upon its rear and knocked into utter confusion. The

enemy raced back behind his guns, leaving over 150 of his men weltering on the veldt. The shock was terrific, and the more so as the smokeless powder of the Mauser cartridges rendered the deadly marksmen's exact position invisible to the troops sent reeling rearward on their battery and supports.

Meanwhile the engagement had become general all along the line. General Hart's division, composed mainly of three crack Anglo-Irish regiments and the Border Regiment, directed its course across from the rising ground southwest of the village to the bend in the Tugela, west of the bridge, where a crossing at the bridle drift "was" to be made, according to General Clery's order. Incredible as it may seem, the men marched along, with officers by their side and generals in command, in quarter-column formation! The line of the advance was almost level; there was no shelter in the character of the ground except a few mimosa bushes between the marching men and the bank across the river where an enemy might be found, but notwithstanding all this the obedient Tommies swung along with rifles on their shoulders, as if the occasion was one of an Easter Monday maneuver near Brighton, and not that of a deadly game of actual war in South Africa.

On the Britishers came towards the drift, the Fusiliers and Connaught Rangers in front, and the Border Regiment and Inniskillings behind. Their pace was being watched in breathless excitement by eyes now inflamed with the passion for killing, which war feeling begets even among psalm-singing Christians, and sights were being adjusted to fire when the troops should reach a certain spot on their way to the river bank, some 300 yards' distance from the Tugela. Like the men of Buller's right wing, they appeared, as seen from the Boer trenches, to be oblivious of real danger. They came along in careless gait, nearer and nearer in their fateful march, until about 600 yards only separated them from the men with leveled rifles behind the river.

There are two explanations given of the mistake which the officer in charge of the Boer Krupp to the left of Christian Botha's position here made in discharging his weapon before the enemy had approached nearer to the river. One is that he saw a movement in the enemy's column as if the more or less close formation of the approaching Tommies was about to be changed in consequence of the fire which was heard from the direction of the Boer left, and he was afraid of losing so tempting a target as the blundering English officers had thus created. The other explanation is, that the Boer center had, as he thought, given the signal for attack by their fire upon the forces in front of them. The temptation theory is the more probable, under the circumstances. The dis-

obedience of orders was only too natural in face of so inviting an occasion, but it saved the advancing English from what would have otherwise been a far more deadly fire had they been allowed to approach a few hundred yards nearer the entrance to the drift.

The Boer gunner had, however, done his work well. His first shell exploded in the midst of the Dublin Fusiliers, as they were in the act of obeying the belated orders of the officer in command, and deploying; twenty of them being killed or wounded on the spot. The Krupp shell was instantly supplemented by repetitions and by volleys of rifle fire, and in a few minutes the whole front line of the advancing brigade was swept down. Like the spluttering of hail on a glass roof came the "ping-pings" of the Mausers, and troops were falling and tumbling all round. It was all the work of a couple of minutes, but within that time Buller's left column, which was to have crossed the Tugela at the drift and to have turned Botha's right, was utterly demoralized. The Border Regiment and the Inniskillings turned back and fled, pursued by the winged messengers of the deadly Mauser, until beyond the range of accurate aim. The Dublin Fusiliers and Connaught Rangers lay flat on the ground to evade the hail of lead flying round them, and the fate of Hart's brigade of famous British troops was sealed for the day. Spasmodic efforts on the parts of a few hundred men separated from the main body of Hart's column were made to find some kind of shelter from Boer bullets better than the bare veldt offered, and some of these detached troops reached the banks of the Tugela in their attempts to escape the galling fire from over the river, but at no time after the attack was opened by the Swaziland burghers on the first line of advance was any serious attempt again made to ford the bridle drift.

Buller's center had in the meantime joined in the fray, which now extended along the whole line from Langwani to the drift. Hildyard, with a force estimated from the Boer positions at 8,000 men, advanced in front of his batteries of naval guns and field artillery, and opened fire upon Botha's positions between the bridges. This attacking force was handled with better judgment than either Buller's right or left columns. It advanced in open order, in line with the railway; the naval guns and twelve-pounders searching the Boer lines with a ceaseless cannonade of lyddite shells and shrapnel.

Botha's anticipation as to the tactics that would be employed by his adversary was fully realized. Buller's main object seemed to be to make the attacks on Botha's right and left positions synchronize with Hildyard's frontal attack in great force upon the Boer center near the wagon bridge; in the expectation that if

he could obtain footing under the cover of Fort Wylie the key of the Boer positions would be won, and with it the battle. Botha relied upon the coolness of the select men he had placed in his center to smash any attempt to cross the river at or near either of the bridges.

Hildyard's division came along in two main columns; the artillery and its supports to the right of the railway (Scene II.), and the infantry about 1,000 yards to the left, opposite to a strongly-entrenched kopje where Pretorius, with a Krupp and pom-pom and concealed riflemen, were posted. As at Magersfontein, the Boer plan was to depend entirely upon the Mauser; the few guns being reserved for use after the enemy had been allowed to approach near enough for the most effective play of rifle fire. Hildyard's guns had belabored Fort Wylie from the back of the village without elicting any response, and thus encouraged by the silence across the river both artillery and infantry continued to advance until about 1,500 yards only separated their front lines from the river bank. Then the men in the trenches let themselves go, and out from the lines between Fort Wylie and the wagon bridge leaped sheets of horizontal fire from 1,500 rifles, with their fifteen shots per minute, into the ranks of the stricken British in front. Pretorius added the fury of his pom-pom to this storm of bullets, and in a few minutes no living object, man or horse, remained standing round Hildyard's batteries behind the village. The troops forming the brigade advancing to the right of the railway were held back as by a resistless hurricane, and they fell on the veldt and lay there at the mercy of the invincible marksmen across the Tugela. No force could face that leaden storm, and, as in the case of Hart's and Barton's broken columns, Hildyard's division of Devons, Surreys, and Yorkshires and the rest, had to yield before the pitiless hail of bullets which swept through their ranks from the Boer lines.

Already the day had been won for the Vierkleur. Buller was compelled to send help to General Hart to bring his far-famed regiments back from their hopeless position in front of some 1,000 cool-headed, steady-firing farmers, and the crossing of the bridle drift was abandoned. Sporadic attacks had been made by some of the Dublin Fusiliers after the first attempt to cross had so signally failed, but they were of no avail against the overpowering fire of the defenders. The Swaziland commando, which formed part of the Boer right wing, at this point allowed a party of the enemy to approach quite near to the river without firing. The few daring Tommies stood out in this action in strong contrast to the thousands who had fled on the first onslaught,

and who could not be induced by entreaty or by threats to form again for attack. They raced forward for the river bank, pluckily disregarding the fate that had befallen their dead comrades lying around, and were quite close to the entrance of the drift when the Swaziland burghers poured a deadly volley into them from the other side of the river, killing or wounding the whole party except six. Fully 100 of the British troops went down in this one short but decisive encounter at the river. This was the last rally of the men of Hart's brigade.

The troops in this column had been stupidly led to a place where they were so many helpless human targets, and from which no officer showed ability to extricate them with soldierly credit. Officers pranced about, shouting ridiculous orders, and calling out "Forward! Charge!" in an impotent display of courage without judgment, and of rank without capacity to inspire confidence. The men ran back, or lay down, as seemed best for their safety, in a condition of absolute demoralization from the galling fire which poured into their ranks from invisible foes over the river. There were enough of them, in all conscience, to have made a human bridge across the Tugela, and to storm the trenches held by only 1,000 farmers on the other side, but there was neither the generalship to direct nor the true military spirit to lead such a movement in the officers of the brigade. They had all lost their heads early in the fight, and Mr. Thomas Atkins is not trained or expected to act independently of his superiors in any emergency. In this instance the troops were mainly Anglo-Irish, and whatever initiative and courage was shown by the groups or companies of the Dublin Fusiliers or Connaughts who rushed for the river bank in face of the Mauser fire was exhibited in the spirit of desperate men who saw themselves helplessly led and hopelessly beaten. It was men like these in the three attacking and beaten British columns who won the generous praise of Louis Botha. His judgment upon their officers and upon the mass of Buller's 23,000 fighters on the field of Colenso was of a totally different character.

At the Boer left similar detached attempts were also made to turn the position, but with a like result. One of these efforts assumed the character of a renewed attack by the major part of Barton's brigade. The column partly re-formed behind its batteries after the first shock and retreat, and went forward more tentatively under cover of its guns. The Imperial Light Horse, Natal Carabineers, Thorneycroft's and Bethune's Mounted Infantry, all South African levies and steady fighters, together with other sections of Buller's right wing, joined in the second attempt on Langwani, but the burghers remained as firm as the rock on

which they grimly held their ground, and poured volley after volley of decimating fire into their foes. The supporting British artillery was of no avail. Its shells hit the hill and missed the Boers, while the 800 marksmen behind their sangars and entrenchments continued to send their steady and resistless rifle fire into the mass of beaten Tommies before them.

This magnificent performance of Botha's left wing in withstanding all attempts by artillery, infantry, and cavalry assault to shake its hold on Langwani was above all praise. The men merited in every way the confidence which had been placed in their grit and accurate shooting when they were selected to hold the hill against all comers. Commandant Joshua Joubert and Field Cornet Swart were both slightly wounded, and had the satisfaction of losing only some six men in killed and wounded during the whole fight, as against the hundreds of the enemy who went down before the fire of their intrepid commandoes.

Upon witnessing the complete failure of Hildyard's attempts to get near the wagon bridge, General Buller resolved upon a retreat from the field on which he had been so completely and so easily beaten.

It was at this stage of the battle, and when Botha's victory was all but complete, that an English officer with two batteries of artillery and their support was seen dashing like fury into the very center of the battle-field, in a mad gallop to save the day and turn the tide of triumph for the Boers before it spelled complete disaster to the British. It was a splendid exhibition of daring and courage of that bold and reckless kind which is always deserving of praise for its heroism, no matter what may be said of the judgment which impels or of the consequences which follow from it. Possibly Colonel Long believed that his batteries and his lyddite-throwing navals had really silenced the Boer artillery west of Fort Wylie, and that a rush forward with some of his guns at this juncture would give him a freer and fuller range at which he might overwhelm the Boer center with a raking fire from a few hundred yards' distance. It may be, also, that as generalship had completely failed to gain the prize of victory, he thought that a forlorn hope of an artillery attack might possibly succeed.

Colonel Long's brigade division had been previously engaged in helping the right flank of Hildyard's attacking columns in their effort to reach the wagon bridge near the Boer center. His guns had moved while thus employed within the zone of Mauser fire, and were driven back, despite all the fury of their fire, which Villebois-Mareuil described derisively as "much money expended in smoke, without any results." Beaten from this point

in the English plan of attack, Long, for some reason not yet fully explained, went one worse in artillery recklessness by galloping his two batteries from his previous position across the open space, right in front of the village of Colenso, and within some 500 yards of the spot from whence the Krugersdorp and Vryheid commandoes had already decimated the foremost lines of Hildyard's column with their fire. The exact spot is marked X in Scene II. of the battle-field.

In a word, the daring Colonel had raced his guns far beyond the covering forces of Hildyard's infantry, and had taken them right under the noses of the riflemen on Fort Wylie. Men had been lying flat on their faces here for hours among the dead and wounded, afraid to lift a head or move a limb, so completely was the place dominated and swept by the Boer riflemen behind the river. But it was into this jaw of death that Colonel Long rushed with his smoking teams and twelve Armstrongs. Nor were the men who worked the doomed batteries wanting in the wild courage of their too daring leader. They served their guns with splendid pluck and marvelous coolness, executing every order with admirable discipline, and the twelve guns were soon engaged again in what had been for them during the whole day but a noisy, ineffectual pounding of rocks and ridges. A few rounds only had been delivered at Fort Wylie, and the adjacent Boer trenches, when Botha's center directed its fire with deadly precision upon the ill-fated batteries, and their doom was sealed.

The Boer general had been quick to note the extraordinary blunder of the British officer in bringing his guns to so dangerous a length from protecting infantry, and instantly availed himself of the chance which was thus given him. He ordered up reenforcements to the positions of the Krugerdorp men at once, and directed a concentrated fire upon the British batteries, while his pom-pom and Krupp were trained upon all points in the rear and around the doomed guns from whence succor might arrive. The attention of the center forces of the two armies was now absorbed in the fight for the imperiled Armstrongs. No braver efforts could have been made to rescue the guns than were attempted again and again by British officers and men, but almost all were shot down who engaged in the perilous task. Lieutenant Roberts, son of Lord Roberts, was mortally wounded in an attempt which was partially successful in the ultimate dragging away of two of the twelve guns. Colonel Long had been severely wounded in the early part of the fray around the batteries, and several other officers had also been shot down in their frantic endeavors to extricate the guns from their desperate situation.

There occurred in connection with Colonel Long's action a tragic incident, similar to that recorded in the account of the battle of Talana Hill, and which cost twenty lives to the enemy by the bungling fire of his own guns. A body of men of Hildyard's column who had taken part in the attack upon the Boer center, and had advanced further than their fellows, were compelled to lie flat on the ground within a couple of hundred yards of the river for several hours after their comrades had been shot back or shot down. They could neither advance nor retire. The general's orders to retire did not reach them, nor could they, without risk of being "potted," have obeyed had they heard and attempted to comply. They lay where a few mimosa bushes or a chance hole in the veldt gave them some kind of protection against the fire of their watchful foes over the river. The burning sun beat down upon their parched bodies. Thirst assailed them with a horrible mockery of the fact that the waters of the Tugela were only a few yards away, and that Death stood as a sentinel to invite them towards this tantalizing offer of relief. It was under these trying conditions that some fifty soldiers heard the welcome sound of Long's guns only 300 yards behind where they had lain in agony all that horrible morning. The batteries had been placed immediately in the rear of where the prostrate British lay, and were already barking in furious challenge at the ceaseless rifle fire from over the river. The prostrate Tommies rose to their feet and made directly for the welcome shelter of Colonel Long's batteries. It was here where the horrible blunder of the English gunners was committed. These men had no knowledge of the position of their unfortunate comrades. They had galloped from another part of the battle-field in obedience to the orders of their officers, and were unaware of the fact that between them and the river were numbers of their own troops in such confinement and shelter as the veldt could afford them. On seeing, therefore, a body of fifty men, rifle in hand, leaping up from near the bank of the river and making towards the guns as if to rush them by assault, two of the Armstrongs were trained upon the unfortunate men and twenty-five of them were shot down by the fire of their own artillery.

This incident gave rise to the rumor that British soldiers were fired upon by their officers for running away and for refusing to charge at the position beyond the river. This was a widespread belief among all the burghers who fought at Colenso, but my own conviction is that the tragedy occurred in the manner I have explained.

Meanwhile continuous but ineffectual attempts were being made to recover the British batteries. Bodies of the Devonshire and

BOER PATROL, COLENSO, DECEMBER, 1899

West Surrey Regiments had been sent by General Buller's orders, earlier in the day, to assist in the task on which all the British energies and anxieties were now centered. Nothing, however, could live near the guns. The spot was the target for a continuous hail of Mauser and pom-pom fire, and numbers of troops thrown forward to retrieve Long's courageous blunder of the morning were shot down before they could reach the spot where dead and wounded men and dying horses lay heaped around the luckless batteries.

Two bodies of the Devonshire and West Surrey Regiments succeeded in getting near to where the guns lay, but were compelled to shelter themselves in two dongas or large holes from the fire of the Boers. Colonel Bullock was in command of the Devons, and, not having received the order to retire, held his ground in the shelter of a hollow, prepared to dispute, as far as possible, the possession of the Armstrongs until darkness might enable the other forces driven back from the field to attempt their rescue.

General Botha had resolved, however, to frustrate this obvious plan. After seeing the enemy shot back from every position they had attempted to occupy, he ordered a couple of hundred burghers to cross the river and bring in the guns. These men were led by Field Cornet Cherrie Emmet, brother-in-law of General Botha, and Lieutenant Pohlman, of the Johannesburg Police, "the bravest of the brave," as they have been deservedly called for their many feats of heroism during the war. Most of the men swam the river with their horses, while others who were unmounted waded across the stream, holding their rifles above their heads; a crossing which showed that, had the British an equal determination to reach the north side of the Tugela in the fight of the morning, there was no insuperable difficulty in the depth of the river to prevent them.

Pohlman and his Police advanced on the first donga, occupied by fifty British officers and men, and called upon them to surrender, which they did without firing a shot. They were sent across to the Boer lines. Emmet waited for the return of Pohlman and his men before advancing upon the second donga, nearest the abandoned batteries, in which Colonel Bullock and some forty of the Devonshire Regiment were concealed. On receiving the required aid, Emmet and the Krugersdorp contingent rushed at the donga, and called upon the British to hold up their hands or they would be shot. The troopers laid down their arms at once, but Colonel Bullock refused to comply with the Boer officer's command, and fired his revolver, wounding one of Emmet's burghers. This act would have met with instant chastisement at the hands of the enraged Boers had Emmet not prevented further firing, so as to save Bullock's life. The English officer then attempted to parley, in order to gain

time. This conduct, however, could not be tolerated, and Bullock was instantly knocked down with the butt-end of a rifle by an elderly Boer, and the last stand for the English batteries had been made. The Devons and their officers were taken prisoner and sent across the river, while Emmet with the Krugersdorp men seized the prize of the day, and carried ten British guns in triumph to where

Photo by Mr. Davitt

ADJUTANT ROBERT EMMET

Of General Louis Botha's Staff

General Botha awaited this final proof of the complete victory which he had won for Transvaal Independence on that memorable 15th of December.

General Botha's report of the battle to President Kruger was wired from Colenso at seven in the evening, after the enemy had been driven back and had retreated to Chieveley. It was a brief report, and will live in military history as worthy of the Christian hero who had gained the great triumph so simply recorded :

"The God of our fathers has to-day granted us a brilliant

victory. We repulsed the enemy on every side, and from three different points. We allowed them to place twelve of their cannons, amidst a heavy bombardment, right alongside the river, and soon as their horses were detached we opened fire upon them with our Mauser musketry, and killed their cannon-service, and shot them so completely out of their position that they only succeeded in rescuing two of their guns.

"We captured the remaining ten—big, beautiful cannons—together with twelve ammunition wagons, filled to the brim.

"We have also made prisoners of war of about 170 of their best men, who stormed us so pluckily time after time.

"There are various officers among our prisoners of war.

"The enemy's loss must have been terrible. Their dead are lying upon each other, and I think the British loss must have been 2,000 men.

"Our loss is confined to about 30 killed and wounded. I will send fuller report later.

"We have brought the enemy's captured cannon through the river.

"The English were continually stationing their ambulance wagons in unauthorized positions in front of their cannons and troops."

On Monday, the 18th, the following additional particulars of the great fight of Friday were wired to the Government at Pretoria by Botha:

"The battle-field was carefully visited by our men, and all that remained upon it in the way of war implements was collected and taken possession of.

"Of the enemy's force we made 180 prisoners of war, and we killed at least 200 of their artillery company.

"During the whole period of battle, the enemy continued to run its ambulance wagon in and about the firing line.

"The English were yesterday engaged in interring their killed until late in the afternoon, and to-day there are still numbers of unburied dead on the battle-field.

"I am unable to send you accurate returns of the dead and wounded on the English side, but I am certain my estimate which I previously wired you is by no means exaggerated.

"The English Red Cross officials told me that on the one battle-field there were alone 760 wounded, and that when the roll-call took place yesterday morning 3,000 of the enemy failed to answer to their names.

"This being the case, an armistice was asked for by the British general for the purpose of finding and burying his dead, and we granted this under certain specific conditions for a period of twenty-four hours, from Saturday morning, 7 o'clock.

"At an adjacent kop there are still lying 21 unburied dead. I have instructed our people to go and inter these poor fellows.

"The British Red Cross officials also state that many of the enemy's officers fell, and that this broke the courage of the rank and file.

"I found the counting of the English dead too inhuman a problem; but their loss was severe, and this is sufficiently proved by their retreat in confusion, their loss of cannon, their surrender

Photo by Mr. Davitt

THE BOER "POM-POM" WHICH DID SUCH EXECUTION AT COLENSO, CALLED "HELL-FIRE" BY ENGLISH TOMMIES

of their positions, the removal of their camp, and their request for a twenty-four hours' armistice.

"The ten cannons and gun-wagons, together with the 12 fully-laden ammunition wagons we captured, are all in perfect order.

"The enemy has pulled up all his tents and broken camp entirely.

"In the documents found in the pockets of the dead and captured officers it appears that there was a force of 23,000 of the enemy on the battle-field."

The completeness of the Boer victory cannot be fully measured by the mere recorded results of the battle. These results were

damaging enough, in all conscience, to British generalship and martial prestige. They spoke to an astounded military world of an army of 23,000 men and 50 guns being beaten by a force which consisted of less than 5,000 farmers and a single battery of artillery. Over four times the number of men and eight times the number of guns were hurled back with ease, and with comparatively little loss to the victors, by a small Transvaal force of no military training, led by a young farmer who had never studied a book on the science of war in his life.

The capture of the ten Armstrong guns was even a more decisive evidence of the thorough defeat and demoralization of General Buller's army after a few hours' fighting than the retreat which followed its failure to cross the Tugela. The facts relating to the action of Colonel Long, and to the various attempts that were made to recover the two batteries, have been related above. The manner in which Emmet and Pohlman with a couple of hundred burghers were permitted to take the guns over the river is more extraordinary still. It must be borne in mind that this was the river which English correspondents and soldiers, writing subsequently about the battle, declared to be "impassable," and to be "staked with barbed wire." Field Cornet Emmet and his men rode their horses through this very stream, with ease, and carried back the 10 Armstrong guns, 12 wagons of ammunition, and 150 prisoners across this identical river, without the loss of a man or a horse, and without encountering the imaginary barbed wire.

While these 200 Boers rode into the Tugela, and dashed at dongas where an unknown number of the enemy lay concealed, six or eight naval guns, and at least as many batteries of field artillery, could not be further away than 7,000 or 8,000 yards during the whole proceeding! Nay, more, 20,000 of the flower of England's army, commanded by the very ablest of her generals, were still actually on or in the immediate vicinity of the battle-field, with arms in their hands. And yet, in view of these astounding facts, General Buller's despatch relating to the battle of Colenso, is mainly remarkable for the amount of praise which he therein bestows upon every one engaged in the fight, with one exception—the one officer who, whatever may be said of his judgment, exhibited some of the same daring courage which sent Emmet and Pohlman and their burghers into the still smoking battle-field to carry back prisoners and batteries under the very eyes of half a hundred English guns and of an army which its general has declared (after the battle) was "capable of going anywhere and doing anything."

Chapter XXIII

BOTHA'S GREAT VICTORY

BRITISH CONCEAL EXTENT OF DISASTER—THE BOER IDENTITY DEPARTMENT—ITS REPORT OF BOER CASUALTIES—WHY BRITISH LOST THE BATTLE—HOW THE TUGELA COULD HAVE BEEN CROSSED—ARTILLERY LESSONS OF THE FIGHT—CAPTAIN PRETORIUS—SUPERIORITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOER—BULLER'S EXAGGERATION OF BOTHA'S STRENGTH—VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL'S PART IN THE BATTLE—HEROISM OF IRISH CONTINGENT

IN his report of the victory of Colenso, General Botha complained of the misuse of ambulance wagons by the British during the engagement. In several instances while the fight was fiercest these wagons were driven right into the firing line, one wagon coming within 500 yards of the river, and offering cover to men who were actively engaged in the conflict. Worse than this, however, was the deliberate action of certain officers, who took the horses from one of these ambulance wagons to harness to the Armstrong batteries, round which the desperate struggle for repossession of Colonel Long's guns waged. It was, in fact, a matter of Boer belief that the two rescued guns were got away in this manner by means of English ambulance horses. This was a glaring and deliberate violation of the Red Cross ensign. The action was seen by every Boer officer of Botha's center, as the whole proceeding took place within 700 yards of where they were witnesses to the act.

No battle was ever fought between armies of civilized nations which showed such an astounding disparity both in the number of combatants on each side, and of casualties. On the British side it was admitted that 1,147 men were killed and wounded, with close upon 200 taken prisoners. This was not, however, an accurate account of General Buller's losses. General Botha estimated these at 2,000, all told, and it was confidently asserted by Boer officers and press men who were present on the battle-field when the killed and wounded were being removed that the English had concealed the real extent of their casualties in their published reports of the fight. A similar charge has been made, it is true, against the Boers by English war correspondents. It is a fact, however, that on

October 19, 1900 ten months after the battle of Colenso, a list of casualties was published by the British War Office, which included several names, followed by the statement, "Killed at Colenso, December 15, 1899." If it is allowed that the total casualties on the English side amounted to 1,500—including prisoners—this figure would represent a loss for General Buller's army, in this one battle, equal to nearly one-third of the total Boer fighting force which inflicted it.

The Boer losses at Colenso were so small that many friends of the Federal cause were incredulous as to the correctness of the returns. The British press loudly protested that the truth was being concealed, declaring that Botha's casualties would, at least, be equal to those of Buller's. Had not the Boer positions been bombarded with lyddite and other shells for two whole days previous to the actual battle? And were there not forty or fifty guns employed against the same positions for the six hours during which the fight continued on the 15th? How, therefore, could the Boers escape with so few killed and wounded?

I was told by General Botha, when discussing these and other facts relating to this battle, that he had ordered one of his officers to count the number of shells which were fired by Buller's batteries at the Boer positions during the two days preceding the main attack upon the Boer lines. "Nineteen hundred and sixty shells were so fired," said the general, "without a single man on our side being hit."

General Botha would be absolutely incapable of resorting to so paltry and unsoldierly a subterfuge as that of concealing the number of his killed. The attempt could not succeed, even if made. The Boer military system renders such deception practically impossible. Men in commandoes group themselves in tents, either as chums, as neighbors when at home, or otherwise; the commandoes being organized territorially, not indiscriminately. These men fight side by side, and return to their laagers and tents together, if not killed or wounded. The absence of a single man would, therefore, be known immediately after an engagement, and his fate as killed, wounded, or missing could not be concealed from his comrades or family.

Another word, however, remains to be said on this point. There was in Pretoria from the commencement of hostilities an Identity Department, whose duties consisted in ascertaining the names of the Boer dead on each battle-field, the number of the killed and wounded, and all other necessary information. Professor Molengraaff was the head of this Department, which was a Transvaal Branch of the Red Cross Society of Geneva. He issued cards at the

outbreak of hostilities to all burghers in the Federal armies. These cards were headed, "Identity Department of the Transvaal Branch of the Red Cross Society, Pretoria," and contained specified space for the following information: "Name of bearer. Age. Residence. Commando." On the side of the card there was printed in very plain type the following direction: "In case of the bearer being killed or wounded, you are requested to send this card through the nearest commanding officer or responsible official to the Identity Department above mentioned." The card also contained the words: "The Identity Department of the Red Cross Society will forward to English authorities information about wounded English soldiers who might be made prisoners. Telegraphic address—Molengraaff, Pretoria."

I had the advantage of meeting at Ossprui Camp, O. F. S., the officer of the Pretoria Red Cross Society who reported to Professor Molengraaff the number of killed and wounded on the Boer side at the battle of Colenso. He was present during the whole of the fighting. His credentials read as follows:

"H. S. Osterhagen, member of Professor Molengraaff's Identity Department, Red Cross Society of Geneva, Transvaal Branch, Head Committee: We hereby certify that bearer, H. S. Osterhagen, is an active and enrolled member of the Identity Department of this Society, and is entitled to the mark of neutrality and the privilege of the Geneva Convention.

"Pretoria, 8th November, 1899.

"H. H. SHEPPARD,
"Acting Secretary.
"Dr. P. M. MOLENGRAAFF,
"Chief of the Identity Department."

Mr. Osterhagen showed me his report book, containing the figures of the Boer killed and wounded at Colenso. The entry read as follows: "Battle of Colenso, December 15, 1899. Number of Federal wounded, 27; number of killed, 6!"

There are four reasons why the British lost the battle of Colenso and with it so many men more than the Boers: The incredible incapacity of the enemy's generals; the astounding inefficiency of the English artillery; the absence of real fighting capacity in the "crack" regiments under Buller's command; and the play of the very opposite qualities on the side of the Boer forces. The bare facts of the battle conclusively establish these four propositions.

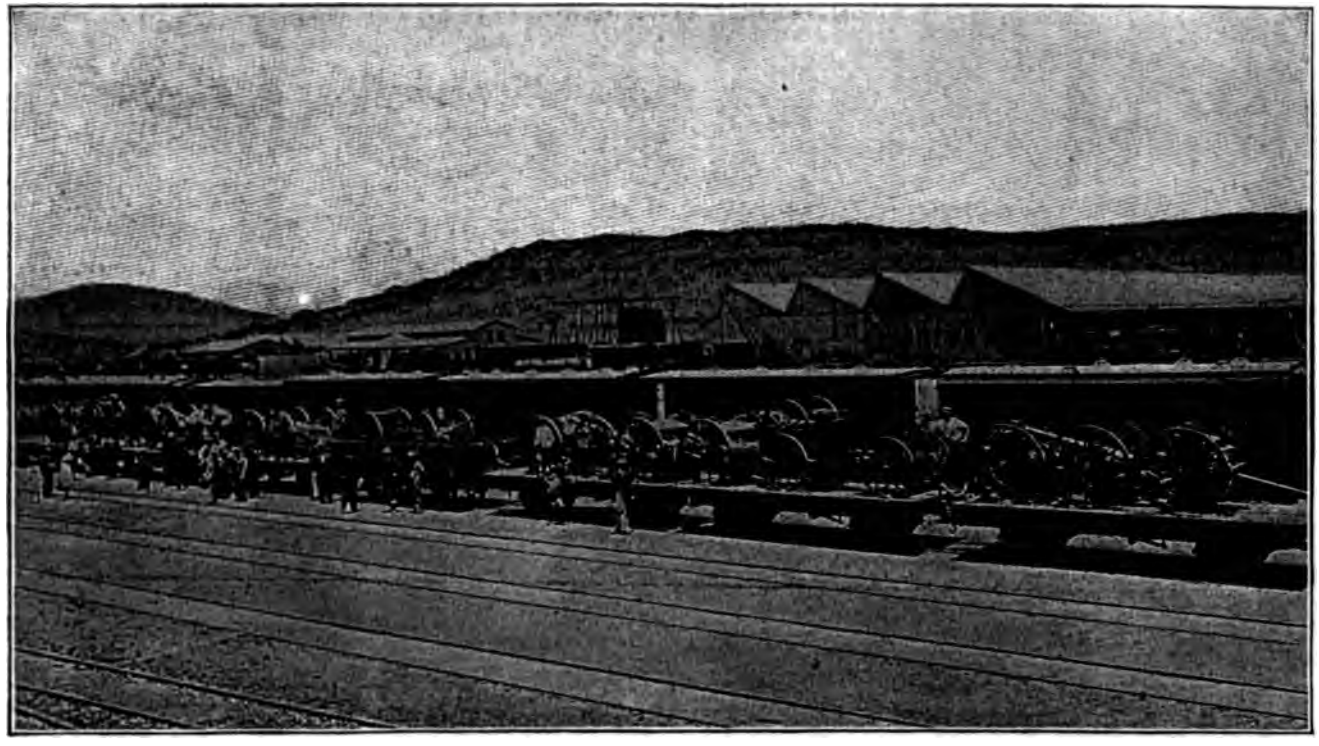
There was only one way in which the Tugela could have been crossed under Buller's plan where he attempted and disastrously failed in his effort to get over. That was by a reckless courage

akin to that of Colonel Long's in his daring but unsustained effort to retrieve the fortunes of the day with his twelve guns. These batteries might have told a different story of the fight had they and the other thirty-four guns been effectively utilized in covering a really determined resolve on the part of Buller's army first to seize and hold Langwani, and then to cross the river at all cost at the bridle drift. It would probably have added a loss of 1,000 more men to the already heavy loss of the British, but this would have been a loss that would have won a battle, in place of a battle lost in humiliating defeat.

It has been demonstrated again and again in this war, and notably at Colenso, that a few quick-firing guns, admirably served by capable artillerists, were more effective in their work than an imposing array of batteries badly handled. The primary object of artillery in a war may be to demoralize, rather than to kill, the enemy; to unnerve his riflemen in their fire, and to cover with the shield of flying and bursting shells the application of the weapon which does most of the killing and wounding in battle. The Boer gunners, however, handled their few cannon with as keen an aim as that which enabled the burghers to make their Mauser fire the deadliest ever recorded of rifle work in war. In no single engagement from Talana to Dalmanutha, excepting Modderspruit, had the Boers more than one gun to six of their enemy's, and it has frequently happened that a solitary pom-pom or quick-firing Krupp has engaged and silenced a whole British battery. The explanation is not flattering to the British military system or to the individual worth of the English soldier, but the facts of this war will make it impossible to ignore the striking superiority of the Boer marksman over Tommy Atkins, whether in rifle or artillery practise, or in any other soldierly quality.

It was not by Mauser fire alone that Buller's guns were silenced and driven off the field at Colenso. The Mauser had to attend to the three attacking divisions, and dealt only with the British batteries when these came within the zone of rifle fire, as in the case of Colonel Long's guns. It was the single pom-pom and the four Creusots and Krupps, so magnificently worked by Pretorius and his men, which fought the British naval guns and the eight batteries of field artillery for five hours, and finally enabled 200 Boers to ride through the "impassable" Tugela, and bring ten of the British guns as a trophy for Pretorius' skill and daring in triumph across the same river, within less than 7,000 yards of the other five or six batteries of English artillery.

There will be food for military critics to digest in the artillery records of this war. A book by Captain Pretorius on his labors



THE BRITISH GUNS, CAPTURED AT COLENSO, ARRIVING AT PRETORIA STATION

and experience in the campaign from Talana t
be an invaluable contribution to military st
plan was simplicity itself, but it was common se
few guns were of the best, thanks to the wisdo
ernment. He relied more upon two or three g
dance of ammunition in any emergency, than upo
that would attract too much responsive fire by t
quire also too large a supply of ammunition to e
rapid service. Mobility, too, was an essential fea
and the practical immunity which he secured for h
to a constant shifting of them from one to another
the progress of the battle, thereby foiling the range o
fire. The vast superiority of the young Boer gunne
of vision, extreme quickness in finding correct ran
curacy of aim over their English adversaries, was app
engagement. All these conditions prevailed in favor
artillery, and when they were applied against the lumb
system of numerous guns badly served, and the tempti
massed Tommies, often ordered to where there was n
nor a tenable position, it is no wonder that at Modderspr
Grange, Colenso, Stormberg, Spion Kop, Magersfo
Paardeberg the loss of the English in killed and wound
enormously disproportioned to the casualties on the Boer

But the real determining factor in the great fight at Co
the marked superiority of the Boer, as a man, over the in
English soldier. Physically, mentally, and morally th
Dutchman, reared on the farms of the country for which
fighting as head of a family, was, for a South African can
as much more capable than the uniformed anemic product of l
city and slum life, trained under a brainless military system
teaches a soldier to do nothing except as he is ordered by
superiors," as a finished athlete is in strength and muscle abo
factory operative disguised in Tommy Atkins's toggery. In he
and strength, in powers of endurance, in clearness of vision and c
sequent accuracy of aim, in nerves free from the shaky effects
dissipation, in the capacity of individual initiative, and, above a
in the consciousness of moral manhood sustained by religious co
viction, the average Boer of Botha's little army on the Tugela wa
a match for any five of the kind of men whom Buller had, th
these were accounted the crack regiments of the British army.

General Buller, following the example of Lord Methuen, grossly
exaggerates the strength of his antagonist at Colenso in his report
of the battle. He says: "I think the force opposed to us must
altogether have equaled our own!" The British force engaged in

the fight has been estimated at 23,000; and this is an English estimate. Other accounts put down Buller's total strength at 21,000 men, with 30 field pieces (the 7th, 14th, 63rd, 64th, and 66th batteries of artillery) and 16 naval guns, including fourteen twelve-pounders and two 4.7 pieces throwing a 50-lb. lyddite shell.

As a matter of absolute fact, Botha had no more than half the commandoes which fought against White at Modderspruit on the 30th of October, the other moiety being engaged in the siege of Ladysmith. His men would not at the utmost exceed 5,000; and of these the Middelburg and Free State burghers—numbering close on 2,000 men—were not in the engagement; their position on the Ladysmith road not having been attacked in any way by the enemy, and not a single shot, consequently, being fired by them in the battle.

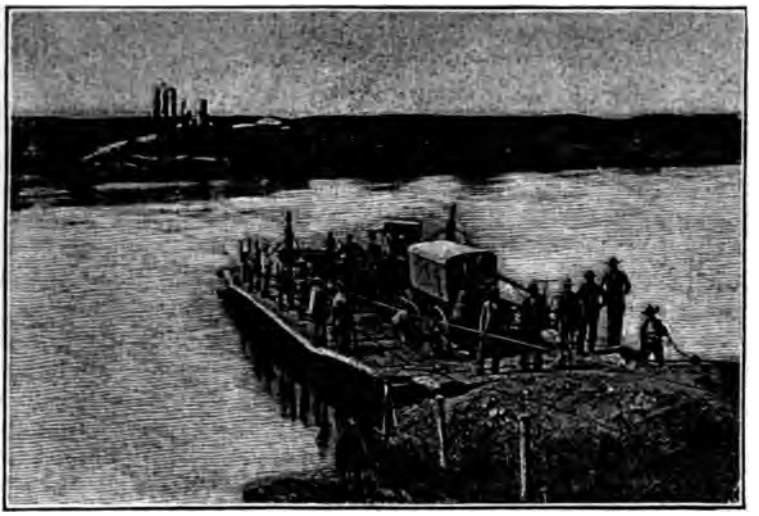
General Botha has declared in an interview that he had only five guns. "My artillery consisted of four guns and one Maxim (pom-pom), under Captain Pretorius, and while I am talking I would like to give the highest praise to that officer. He is the son of Henning Pretorius, formerly lieutenant-colonel of the Transvaal Artillery. The courage he displayed is almost past belief. He rode in the most fearless fashion up and down our lines, from one gun to another, exposed every minute to death, and the inspiriting effect he had on his men was something to remember. Such courage I have never seen excelled." Generous praise, indeed, but no more than what was deserved by the man who with a single battery fought and beat thirty English field pieces and sixteen naval—lyddite-throwing—guns. Pretorius is aged about thirty-five years, is as dark as an Italian, with deep, flashing eyes; stands five feet ten inches in height, straight as a lance, and looks the very figure of an ideal soldier. He speaks no English. His father was one of the founders of the Transvaal Artillery.

In each English acount of this battle it is affirmed that the Boers occupied rifle-pits on the south side of the river. This is untrue. Except at Langwani, there was not a single burgher on that side of the Tugela until the Krugersdorp men and Johannesburg Police went over for the British guns. Pits had been dug south of the river by the English when in occupation of Colenso in November, and on these being seen by British correspondents after the battle on the 15th December, it was assumed that they had been occupied by Boer riflemen.

There were no guns on Fort Wylie: no barbed wire in the Tugela; no damming of the river at the bridle drift, and no guns nearer where Hart's brigade attempted to cross the stream than the two Creusot fifteen-pounders on each side of the Ladysmith road, and

a Krupp howitzer midway between the drift and the wagon bridge. It was this latter gun which sent the shells into the Dublin Fusiliers when nearing the drift in the morning. The Krupp quick-firer and solitary pom-pom were on the small kopje, next to Fort Wylie, serving at Botha's center.

Another English fiction gives to Colonel Villebois-Mareuil the credit of planning the Boer lines of defense at Colenso, and with being the active military assessor of Louis Botha during the battle. It flattered British military vanity to think that Buller's army was beaten by French tactics and not by Boer generalship. Colonel



FERRY ACROSS THE TUGELA RIVER

Villebois only arrived on the Tugela on the evening of the 13th of December, and did not see or meet General Botha until the following morning, the eve of the battle. He says in his diary that it was he who advised Botha to occupy Langwani. This hill, however, had already been prepared for occupation, as the existence of its deep trenches and strong sangars on the 15th amply demonstrated. No. Colenso was a Boer victory in every sense, and its hero was Louis Botha.

When the English guns were caught within the circle of Mauser fire from the Krugersdorp men, Botha sent for reenforcements for this position, and men galloped in from the right, where Hart's brigade had been made to bite the dust by the Swaziland burghers. Twenty men of Blake's corps were with Colonel Trichardt in the rear, near the position held by the Middelburg Boers, and the

Irishmen were among the first to ride over the space swept by the other English batteries to the aid of the Krugersdorp commando. Some of them also formed part of the mixed body of Krugersdorp men, Johannesburg Police, and other burghers who crossed the Tugela and brought the Armstrong guns in triumph through the "impassable" river. The two men who had the honor of reaching the guns first, and who were wounded by Bullock's Devons, were Adjutants Grey and Ackerman, of Ward 2, Krugersdorp commando. It was Cherrie Emmet who commanded the contingent sent by Botha to bring in the guns, and who saved Colonel Bullock from the consequences of his action in firing on the contingent after the English had complied with Emmet's "Hands up!" Robert Emmet, brother of Cherrie, was with difficulty restrained from shooting Bullock for his conduct. The Emmets are brothers-in-law of General Botha, and claim a blood relationship with the family of Robert Emmet, the Irish hero-martyr.

Chapter XXIV

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH

BOER VICTORY AT TATHAM'S FARM—JOUBERT GRANTS WHITE'S REQUESTS FOR ARMISTICE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF HOSPITAL CAMP—BRITISH FORCES IN LADYSMITH—DESCRIPTION OF LADYSMITH—JOUBERT'S MISTAKEN POLICY IN INVESTING PLACE—PLAN OF INVESTMENT—BOER VISITORS—MR. STEEVENS' DESCRIPTION OF TOWN'S CONDITION—SKIRMISH BETWEEN BLAKE'S BRIGADE AND THE ROYAL IRISH—JOUBERT VETOES BLAKE'S PROPOSITION TO DROP DYNAMITE BOMBS INTO TOWN—NATAL VOLUNTEERS DISABLE BOER'S LONG TOM—OTHER SORTIES—REPULSE OF BOER ATTACK ON THE PLATRAND—GENERAL WHITE'S REPORT—INCIDENTS OF THE FIGHT.

SOME attempts to prevent the investment of Ladysmith had been made by General White after his defeat at Modderspruit on the 30th of October. They were in the nature of reconnaissances in force to find out the disposition of Joubert's lines, and to obstruct as far as possible the obvious intention of the Boer general to work round to the south of the town, and cut the British connection with Colenso. The first of these efforts was made the day following the Modderspruit battle, and resulted in an artillery duel between the English naval guns and Trichardt's Creusots, with little or no loss to either side except in shells and ammunition. On the 2nd of November a large force of Lancers and other cavalry advanced as far as Tatham's Farm, near Besters, where they encountered the Free Staters under Martinus Prinsloo and Commandant Nel. A brief but fierce fight ensued, the Free Staters crying, "No quarter to the butchers of Elandslaagte!" as they shot down their foes. The Lancers suffered heavily, and were ultimately driven back to Ladysmith. Both sides have claimed the victory in this engagement; the English reports asserting that the Boer camp had been captured, while the Free Staters declared they had only fallen back for a time to entice the Lancers into a tight place. This has been a favorite maneuver of the Boers throughout the war, and it was its adoption on this occasion which induced the English to claim the honor of the fight. After this encounter White and his army became isolated, and the siege of Ladysmith began.

The British general asked for and obtained an armistice after

the three days' fighting around Ladysmith which began at Modderspruit and ended at Tatham's Farm. It was a cool request in view of the rough handling which his forces had received, and was not altogether justified by the number of British killed and wounded. Had Lord Roberts been in Joubert's place, with a Boer request for a similar cessation of hostilities, it would not have been granted. His reply would have been, "We must fight it out," and this ought to have been Joubert's answer, as it was the advice of all his younger officers. Joubert also agreed to a proposal to transfer the sick and wounded from Ladysmith to a neutral position four miles southeast of the town. To this hospital camp a train ran every day during the siege, and, as the site of the camp was near to Bulwana Hill, where the Boers held their most important position, White had a means in this arrangement by which he could be informed daily of the movements of his opponents at the one point in the Boer investment of the town which was the most vulnerable to attack from a relieving force from the south. Louis Botha and all the other Boer officers were strongly opposed to so dangerous a concession being made to so unscrupulous a foe, but Joubert's word in military matters was law with President Kruger. General White's proposal was therefore agreed to, and the English hospital camp near the Intombi Spruit remained a source of vexation and weakness to the Boer forces during the whole time of the siege.

The following forces in men and guns were comprised in the Ladysmith garrison: The 13th, 21st, 42nd, 53rd, 67th, and 69th batteries of Royal Field Artillery, with a battery of naval guns, and No. 10 Mountain Battery; in all, 48 guns.

The cavalry and infantry, with local Natal Volunteers, included the 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards, 5th and 16th Lancers, 11th, 18th, and 19th Hussars, 1st Battalion Royal West Surrey Regiment, 1st (King's) Liverpool Regiment, 1st Devonshire Regiment, Somersetshire Light Infantry, 1st Leicestershire Regiment, 1st Scottish Rifles, 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps, 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps, 1st Manchester Regiment, 2nd Gordon Highlanders, 1st Rifle Brigade, 2nd Rifle Brigade, Imperial Light Horse, Natal Volunteer Force, 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, 2nd West Riding Regiment, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, etc.; in all, according to Boer estimates, between 12,000 and 13,000 troops, not including civilian combatants.

Ladysmith was the third most important place in Natal, ranking next after Durban and Maritzburg. It had a white population of some 3,000, with 2,000 natives and some East Indians. The town is situated on Klip River, a tributary of the Tugela, and lies part in a hollow and part on the side of a ridge within a semicircle of

surrounding hills. The Klip winds its way from the west by the south and east side of the town, with banks standing twenty or thirty feet above the level of the stream. These steep banks naturally played an important part in General White's plans for the defense of his garrison. Hills and ridges encircle the town at a distance of four or five miles towards each point of the compass. The hills dominated the place and gave to Joubert's two large Creusot six-inch guns positions from which it was easily shelled with such long-range pieces. The open character of the ground, however, within the perimeter of the actual lines of investment, offered the English general every protection against the fear of assault by surprise, while affording him ample latitude for defensive and offensive siege operations as well. Ridges south and west of the town gave him strong natural positions on which to build redoubts and other protection for his naval guns, while equally well-sheltered places were found for the smaller field artillery. Huge stores of ammunition and other war material had been accumulated, along with adequate food provision for emergencies, and, thus situated and provided for, General White was enabled to withstand even the long siege to which his well-equipped garrison was subjected.

This siege has been one of the few real British triumphs of the war; but a triumph by virtue of endurance rather than by any striking military performance, and chiefly owing to the lamentable blunder, military and political, by which General Joubert played into the hands of his adversary's purpose. General White has clearly explained what his governing object was in consenting to so large a force of British troops submitting to so long a siege: "I was confident of holding out at Ladysmith as long as might be necessary, and I saw clearly that so long as I maintained myself there *I could occupy the great mass of the Boer armies,* and prevent them sending more than small flying columns south of the Tugela, with which the British and Colonial forces in my rear, aided by such reenforcements as might be shortly expected, could deal without much difficulty."—(Lieutenant-General Sir George White to Field Marshal Lord Roberts, South African Despatches, Vol. XI., p. 15.)

Joubert deluded himself with the notion that the successful keeping of 12,000 soldiers of the Queen inside of Ladysmith would result in a second post-Majuba peace compact. He died broken-hearted with the knowledge that his policy had been the means of tying up "the great mass of the Boer armies" in the task of watching one English general, while Botha, Cronje, and De la Rey had to fight three armies, one of them four times as large as General White's,

with "the small flying columns" which were spared from the field of siege operations in Natal.

Joubert's chief positions in his lines of investment are roughly indicated in the points of the compass. Pepworth Hill, north of the town; Lombard's Kop, east; Onderbroek Kop, south; and a series of strong ridges to the west—the average distance from Ladysmith being four or five miles. Bulwana Hill, to the southeast, and Surprise Hill, to the northwest, were a little out of the compass bearings, but the guns on each of these hills played a very prominent part in the siege, being some 7,000 or 8,000 yards' distance from the town.

Joubert's head laager was at Modderspruit Station, behind Pep-

BOER HOWITZER SHELLING LADYSMITH

worth Hill, and a system of field telegraphy organized by Lieutenant Paff enabled him to keep in constant touch with all points of the besieging lines. His commandoes were those with which he had invaded Natal, and fought the engagement at Modderspruit on the 31st of October; less, however, by the forces lent to Botha for the dash on Estcourt, and for the subsequent and brilliant campaign on the Tugela against Buller. It is almost incredible that so astute a general as Joubert could have delegated the task of opposing the advance of an army, first of 20,000 and then of 30,000 men and fifty guns, to a body never stronger than 5,000 burghers, with six or seven guns at the most, while retaining an equal number of men, and fully seventeen of the best guns of the Transvaal artillery for the task of hemming in General White and the British field force of Natal.

Such, however, were the measures to which the ill-advised siege of Ladysmith committed the Republics in face of three other advancing armies having Pretoria as their ultimate objective.

Two "Long Toms," two fifteen-pound Creusots, four seven-pound Krupps, two Krupp howitzers, and seven pom-poms—in all, seventeen guns—were in the service of the besiegers during the early part of the investment. The two six-inch guns were first placed on Pepworth and Bulwana hills, the former being subsequently removed to Lombard's Kop. The entire artillery forces were under the control of Colonel Trichardt, Majors Wolmarans and Erasmus, Captain Pretorius, and Lieutenant Du Toit; Pretorius leaving the lines round Ladysmith with General Botha when the Tugela campaign was decided upon in November, and Wolmarans taking charge of Botha's guns at Spion Kop.

The besieging forces were roughly divided into four main laagers, corresponding in location more or less to the points of the compass, the guns being distributed accordingly—Joubert to the north, Schalk Burger east, Lukas Meyer south, and Prinsloo, with the Free State contingent, to the west. These divisions, however, were more nominal than otherwise, as the splendid mobility of both mounted men and artillery enabled Joubert to quickly concentrate his forces at any point where an emergency demanded such a measure. It was this feature of the Boer tactics which deceived General White into believing he was opposed by "25,000 men!" —a modest estimate of his opponent's strength which left Buller, Gatacre, Roberts, French, and Methuen almost without Boers to fight.

The only serious injury done to Ladysmith during the siege was by the Long Toms from Bulwana and Lombard's Kop. Those magnificent siege guns were placed on these elevated hills under the superintendence of Mr. Sam Leon, of the firm of Leon and Grunberg, engineers, formerly agents of the famous Creusot Company.

During November the Boer laagers around Ladysmith attracted visitors of both sexes from the Transvaal; non-combatants who traveled down to witness the siege. The prowess of "Long Tom," which was a legendary rather than actual record of his doings against the imprisoned Rooineks, made the two guns on Lombard's Kop and Bulwana objects of almost religious regard for the holiday-seekers. Ladies by the hundred came from Johannesburg and Pretoria to enjoy the sensation of besieging an English army, and to experience the satisfaction of touching the big Creusot gun. The natural pride of the Boer, always strongly felt if seldom expressed in speech or act, was impossible to disguise in those who witnessed

the plight of the Ladysmith garrison, hemmed in by the brothers, husbands, and sons of the patriotic women of the Transvaal. The bravery of the sons of the veldt was borne testimony to in the plight of the English troops cooped up within the British town, and mothers returned home to repeat the story of what they had seen to the young lads, whose longings were thereby excited to go likewise and fight the Rooinek foe.

The condition to which Ladysmith had been reduced, even as early as November, has been pithily described by the late Mr. G. W. Steevens, the noted war correspondent, who died subsequently as a fever victim of the siege:

"Deserted in its markets, repeopled in its wastes, here ripped with iron splinters, there again rising into rail-roofed, rock-walled caves; trampled down in its gardens, manured where nothing can ever grow; skirts hemmed with sandbags, and bowels bored with tunnels—the Boers may not have hurt us, but they have left their mark for years on Ladysmith. They have not hurt us much, and yet the casualties mount up. Three to-day, two yesterday, four dead or dying, and seven wounded with one shell—they are nothing at all, but they mount up. I suppose we stand at about fifty now (November 26), and there will be more before we are done with it." ("From Cape Town to Ladysmith," p. 131.)

With a garrison which did not hope to effect its own unaided relief, and an investing force which was not allowed to attempt to carry the town by assault, there were few serious engagements which require recording in the story of the siege. The investment was carried on in the most leisurely and routine manner possible from day to day, Sunday being regularly observed as a holiday for the gunners. So methodical became the work of penning in White and his forces that the burghers in large numbers were in the habit of visiting their families hundreds of miles away, of going home to attend to farms and business matters, and returning again for a spell of besieging Ladysmith. In fact, the shutting up of an English army in a British town was turned into a military picnic by the investing Boers.

The Irish Brigade, saving the portion who volunteered to assist in the battle of Colenso, was attached to Joubert's main laager, under the direction of Colonel Trichardt, of the Artillery, throughout the whole of the siege. The men had therefore taken part in only a few of the regular engagements previous to the advance of Roberts on Pretoria. Blake's men amused themselves occasionally by sending challenges to the Anglo-Irish in the enemy's ranks, kindly informing them what the "boys" with the Boers were intent on doing with their recreant countrymen should they intrude their

noses outside the lines of Ladysmith. Responsive messages in a similar strain came back, and, according to an account given by one of Blake's officers, chance brought about "a meeting" between the challenging Irishmen during one of the sorties from the town. The narrative relates that Blake and his brigade were in charge of a small hill which flew the green flag, in advance of Colonel Trichardt's camp, when a large body of the Royal Irish were seen to be making for the kopje, where a gun had previously been placed. Blake enjoined his men to resort to the following stratagem so as to bring the "Royals" as near as possible to the hilltop before firing: A third of the brigade showed themselves under the flag and fired rather wildly at the advancing troops; then, on these reaching the bottom of the kopje, the men with the flag were seen to run to the rear. The Irish Tommies came panting up the side, shouting for the "flying Fenians" to stand. They stood; the Tommies came on to the very crest of the hill, when up sprang Blake and his command, and sent the contents of their Mausers almost point blank into the ranks of the "Royals," who raced down the kopje much quicker than they had mounted, leaving a dozen of their comrades to the subsequent attention of the Boer ambulance.

Colonel Blake's plan for forcing an issue with the garrison in the early days of the siege was to fly from Lombard's Kop, Bulwana, and other hills, huge kites having as weights for tails small dynamite bombs which could be dropped perpendicularly on to gun redoubts, trenches, and the town. To this proposal Joubert would lend no sanction whatever. He pointed out that the English, tho very unscrupulous, had made no use of dynamite bombs from their balloons, while, in addition, he declared that he had searched the Scriptures in vain for any record of the use of dynamite in the fighting related in the Old Testament. This last objection was conclusive.

Three times during November something more than the regulation daily bombardment came off in small engagements; in the first of which the Boers claimed the honors of the day, and the English the other two. In December the garrison, learning doubtless of the departure of several commandoes southward to meet Buller, developed more daring in their night adventures towards the Boer positions. They had a very justifiable grudge against the Long Tom on Lombard's Kop for its constant attention to the citizens and soldiers of the beleaguered town. It was resolved to make a midnight attack upon the gun, and the comparative smallness of the force which undertook the dangerous task testifies to the belief in Boer circles that the whole affair was suggested by treachery on the part of some enemy in the Pretoria laager. It is evident

anyhow that the guarding of the big gun was most carelessly conducted, or such a humiliating stroke against its protection could not have rejoiced the hearts of the successful assailants.

A large number of these were Natal Volunteers, who, on being challenged by burgher sentinels at the foot of the hill, replied in the Taal, "All right," and were stupidly allowed to proceed. They climbed the hill, shot down the few burghers who were in immediate attendance on the gun, and, in the most cool and daring manner, not only smashed the breech mechanism of "Tom," but punched the date of the transaction into the side of the monster. A howitzer on the same hill was likewise injured, while part of a Maxim gun was carried back as a trophy by the triumphant troops. This exploit created great indignation in the Boer laagers, and the officer who was then in charge of the guns on Lombard's Kop was court-martialed, and suspended for a short time for the carelessness which had contributed to the success of General Hunter's midnight adventure. "Long Tom" was disabled, and had to be sent to Pretoria for repairs. Messrs. Leon and Grunberg soon fixed him all right again, and in the course of a fortnight he was on his way to Kimberley to make things a little more lively for Cecil Rhodes' city.

Three days after the surprise at Lombard's Kop, another attempt of a similar nature was made on a hill north of the town, where a howitzer was located, but the attempt only partly succeeded in this case, no real injury being done to the gun, while the 600 troops who had taken part in the enterprise were surrounded on coming down the hill, and driven with a loss of some seventy of their number back to Ladysmith.

A week later a still less successful but equally daring exploit was attempted in a surprise attack upon a small outpost of the Standerton commando. The night was pitch dark, and this aided the purpose of the attacking party. They were unobserved by the possibly dozing sentinels until within a distance of fifty yards of the sangars behind which the burghers were lying. The startling cry of "Hands up!" was answered, however, by five shots from the awakened Boers. They were surrounded by some 500 of their enemies, and, finding retreat cut off, they neither asked for quarter nor did anything else but pour the contents of their rifles into the ranks of the foes. The laager near by was aroused by the fire, and the attacking party hastily retired on Ladysmith. On the arrival of the burghers who were defending the gun, which was the main object of the sortie from the town, the five men of the brandwacht were found dead, but around them in a circle also lay the dead bodies of fifteen British soldiers.

These adventures on the part of a garrison believed to be reduced to a state of privation by the siege created so strong a feeling among the burghers for something more effective being attempted against the town than the routine attentions of Long Tom, that Joubert's objections to a direct assault were swept aside. The victories of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso were deemed to be so many reflections upon the inactivity of 5,000 or 6,000 men around Ladysmith, and it became necessary to show the Republics

Photo by Mr. Davitt

COLONEL VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL AND BARON VAN DEDEM

The Colonel is the man in riding-breeches; on his left is the Baron; on his right, the Landrosts of Hoopstad and Kroonstad

what the men of Modderspruit could do. Colonel Villebois-Mareuil had arrived on the scene, and, after making himself acquainted with White's plan of defense in an inspection of the English lines, strongly urged the Commandant-General to sanction the demand in the laagers for the delivery of a decisive blow. He drew up a report on the enemy's positions and of how the assault should be made, and this was in due course submitted to a kriegsraad for consideration. Joubert still strongly objected to the proposal, tho not to the extent of absolutely vetoing it. His reasons for refusing to sanction the assault after the first great chance which followed

the battle of Modderspruit was neglected, were sound and unassailable. The conditions were all favorable for such an action then. The two forces were almost equal in strength, and the enemy were disheartened over the loss of Dundee and the defeat of the 30th of October. These conditions did not again prevail after White had had time enough, unwisely given to him in a three days' armistice —and in a Sunday every week—to entrench himself on the Platrand, and in the steep sides of the Klip River. He had also been allowed to disembarrass himself of his sick and wounded, and to erect a "neutral" hospital under the protection of Bulwana Hill, from whence his spies, under the guise of sick patients, could send him daily reports of the Boer movements in and around the most important point of Joubert's line of investment. Moreover, the besieging forces, after the termination of the armistice following Modderspruit, were numerically unequal to the work of carrying Ladysmith by storm. Such a task, to promise reasonable chances of success, should not be faced with, at least, less than twice the number of the defending garrison, and Joubert never again had 8,000 burghers before Ladysmith after the Tugela column under Louis Botha had been deducted from the forces which won the battle of Modderspruit. In fact, the average strength of the Commandant-General's army surrounding White, from the 1st of December to the raising of the siege, would not be more than 6,000 men, while at times it was—unknown to the garrison, presumably—down as low as 4,000 burghers.

These facts were not fully appreciated by Villebois-Mareuil when he pressed so urgently, in his report to Joubert, for the storming of the town. He had, however, found that White's officers relied more upon their belief in the well-known objections of Joubert to sanction hazardous enterprises than upon their strength and resources against any determined assault, and the prevalence of this feeling of moral security on the enemy's part was Villebois' strongest ground for urging a well-planned attack by way of a double surprise.

Villebois felt keenly the apparent want of confidence in his military judgment shown by Joubert and Schalk Burger. He looked on their reluctance to act on his report upon the Ladysmith defenses as a mistrust of his capacity. In this he was mistaken. No foreign officer who had come to the Transvaal commanded as much confidence and respect, and the ultimate adoption of his scheme showed how unfounded were his suspicions.

In judging rather severely the military shortcomings of Boer generals, he forgot to place himself in their position, and to obtain thus a fairer standpoint for his criticism of their methods. They had

beaten the English at Dundee, Modderspruit, Magersfontein, Stormberg, Willow Grange, and Colenso by Boer tactics. They had lost at Elandslaagte, largely through Uitlander tactics and imprudence, while the Scandinavian methods at Magersfontein, heroic and magnificent tho they undoubtedly were, would have meant another defeat, if generally followed, where the cooler and better-calculated Boer methods achieved a brilliant victory over immense odds. It was these considerations which influenced Joubert and Burger when weighing Villebois' plans and proposals, and not any want of confidence in his own earnestness and military judgment. In fact, what Tacitus said of the Batavian ancestors of the Boers applied to the farmer generals of the little Republics: "Others go to battle, these go to war!"

It was finally agreed to make a surprise attack upon the Platrand which was the key to Ladysmith. This elevated ridge is flat-topped in formation, two or three miles long, 600 or 700 feet high, sloping up from the town in the southeastern direction, with the Klip River running between its eastern end and the two hills of Lombard's Kop and Bulwana. It was strongly fortified with redoubts, chanzas, and rifle-pits, and defended by the naval guns, and by White's strongest posts. On the reverse, or southern side, it sloped down in the direction of one of the Boer laagers, and was approached by a deep spruit running north from Grobler's Kloof into the Klip River, and also by several narrow valleys formed by the southern spurs of the "Platkop," as the Boers named the long hill. Villebois-Mareuil's practised military eye had noted the cover for a movement by a surprise force thus offered in the bed of the spruit and the kloofs of the Platrand, and his plan of attack was suggested accordingly. A body of men from Lombard's Kop, on the east, was to move south of the English hospital camp, cross the railway, and make for the Fouries' Spruit alluded to, where another force from the laager at Grobler's Kloof, and also from Botha's camp on the Tugela, would be met. These men would ascend the spruit behind Caesar's Camp, and rush the first English entrenchments, which, if gained, would mask the assailants against the English guns further west on the hill. Simultaneously the Free Staters of the west laager, under De Villiers and Nel, were to advance on Wagon Hill, the extreme western height of the Platrand, and repeat the attack to be made at the other extremity. The Pretoria laager, to the north of Ladysmith, was to cooperate as occasion might require, the object being to carry the assault from positions south and west which offered the best cover for the advancing burghers. The assault was to be delivered under the shelter of darkness on the early morning of the 6th of January, and every

precaution was taken against knowledge of the intended coup leaking out.

The two extremes of the Platrand were usually held by a few detachments of White's men, secure in the belief that the Boers would only continue their long range artillery fire in the day, and would not attempt to storm at night without bayonets. On the night previous to the attack being delivered, both the positions at Caesar's Camp and Wagon Hill were reenforced by guns and men; indicating that General White had learned of the contemplated assault on his southern defenses. His spies in the hospital camp

PRETORIA TOWN BURGHERS AT THE FRONT

near Bulwana must have obtained the information in some way from the Boer lines close by.

By two o'clock on the morning of the 6th of January the burghers chosen for the assault had all reached their respective rendezvous. The Utrecht men, with some Standerton and Wakkerstroom burghers, under the east slope of the Platrand; Villebois-Mareuil being a spectator, but not a participator; the men from Heidelberg were round to their right, a mile from the English hospital; and 1,000 of the Vryheid commando and 100 German Uitlanders had marched from Colenso to the spruit below Bester's Farm, having the Free State contingent under Wagon Hill, to their left.

The attack was made at the three points almost simultaneously, the Vryheiders leading and advancing up the slope of the hill

from the south. The enemy was in no way taken by surprise, and the first burghers who cleared the crest fell before a well-directed fire from behind the outer lines of the British positions. But the burghers did not waver. They fired lying in many places within fifty yards of the Tommies, making gaps behind the chanzas wherever a head offered a target for an aim. The Utrecht men rushed the trenches in front of them, and poured a volley into the troops behind, who fled to the rear and were shot down as they ran, the burghers taking and holding the vacated trenches. Both here and in front of the Vryheid men Colonial troops were located. They hailed the burghers in the Taal, and told them "Not to shoot at your own people." This ruse did not, however, succeed, as the answering rifles gave the replies which in each place decided the immediate occupation of the crest-line of the Platrand.

The Free Staters had likewise captured the west end of Wagon Hill, led by the brave De Villiers, of Harrismith, and by four o'clock, as the light began to make all things visible, the lower part of the Platrand from east to west was in possession of the burghers. Thus the first line of the enemy's position on the hill was gallantly captured and held, but the English were by no means beaten off. They fell back to other entrenchments, nearer their guns, and clung to them with dogged tenacity until reenforcements came from the town below, and from other posts within the besieged area.

The flat top of the hill became a scene of the most determined fight which had taken place since the siege began, the combatants in several places being separated by only a few yards. The defenders of the hill had the service at close range of their naval and field guns, and it was this great advantage, coupled with a failure on the part of the Pretoria commando to succor the Free Staters on Wagon Hill, which enabled White ultimately to beat off the determined assault of his opponents. The fight at this end of the Platrand had been hot and furious from the beginning, the Free Staters repulsing every attempt made to break their hold on the hill. White hurled several detachments of Highlanders, King's Royal Rifles, and Imperial Light Horse against Commandant Nel and his brave Heilbron men—the men who had gallantly helped to storm Nicholson's Nek—but, tho subjected to a terrific fire from two batteries, a naval gun, and fully 2,000 of White's garrison, the Harrismith, Heilbron, Vredefort, and Kroonstad burghers heroically withstood the onslaught, and maintained their position for fully ten hours. Four times in succession during the continuous struggle on and around Wagon Hill did the English pluckily rush forward to recapture their ground, only to be shot back

remorselessly by the intrepid burghers, until the hill in front of them was almost covered with dead and wounded Tommies.

The Boer guns from Bulwana rendered very little effective service to the burghers engaged in holding the west end of the Platrand. The distance, except to the eastern slope, where the Utrecht men easily held their ground under cover of Long Tom's shells, was too great for accurate shooting, while the enemy's whole batteries were on and around the Platrand within close reach of the men who had climbed and held the hill.

During the afternoon a furious storm of rain swept across the battle-field, drenching both sides, but in no way abating the fury of the fight for the possession of the hill.

There can be no denying the courage and tenacity with which the garrison fought for the retention of the Platrand. Their fifty guns were, however, almost all employed, and to this overwhelming artillery fire was mainly due the repulse of the attack. The conviction is general among the Boer officers who led the assault, that, had the needed assistance from the north laager been given to the Free Staters, they could have held that end of the hill, and from thence have captured the town.

The moral effect of the storming of the Platrand was very marked on the English, who were cured by it of the superstition about Boers dreading a close encounter, and fearing to face fixed bayonets. Both the Utrecht men on the east, and the Harrismith burghers on the west side of the hill, rushed trenches and shot down Tommies armed with bayonets at a few yards distance.

The lesson learned on the Boer side from the fight was confirmatory of Joubert's view, that the Boer forces were not numerically strong enough for plans of assault requiring big battalions for the success of most risky enterprises, and for the certain losses which victory or defeat in attempting them always demand.

The attempt to storm the Platrand was the last serious engagement in or around Ladysmith until its relief was effected in February.

General White's report of his casualties in this battle says :

"Our losses, I regret to say, were very heavy, consisting of 14 officers and 135 non-commissioned officers and men killed, and 31 officers and 244 men wounded."

This very large percentage of killed as against wounded tells the story of the fierce character of the Boer attack. General White continues by saying:

"I have not been able to ascertain the actual loss of the Boers, but 79 bodies found within our lines were returned to them next

day for burial, and native spies report that their total casualties could not be less than 700."

As against this Kaffir estimate of the injury inflicted on the Boers, the official lists of their losses, as published in the "Volksstem" of January 10 and 12, 1900, give the killed as 55, and the wounded as 135. The lists are exhaustive in supplying the names, full home address, and the commandoes of the men killed and wounded. The Free Staters were the heaviest losers, the Utrecht, Wakkerstroom, and Heidelberg burghers coming next in proportionate losses.

There are numerous heroes where all were brave in the Boer accounts of the Platrand fight. One old burgher, however, is accorded the palm by universal testimony among the commandoes for a magnificent display of daring, which unfortunately cost him his life. He was old Signatius Vermaak, of Ward 4, Vryheid, but was fighting with the Utrecht men in their attack on Caesar's Camp. He was Acting Field Cornet, a man of herculean proportions, and over sixty years of age. He dashed ahead of his men in the first rush for the enemy's trench, and in the half light of the dawn found himself confronted by three soldiers, who had missed him in their fire.

The old Boer knocked their bayonets aside with a sweep of his clubbed Mauser, and handed the three men over to his followers as prisoners. He was shot dead a few moments afterward as the burghers of his ward were clearing the trenches of their occupants. These were mainly Natal Volunteers and Police, who had tried in the darkness to make the advancing Boers believe they were friends and not enemies. The fight which ensued at that spot was of the most furious kind, and very few of the British Colonials lived to tell the tale of that short but sanguinary encounter round old Vermaak's body on that early Saturday morning on the slope of Caesar's Camp.

The Harrismith burghers had to lament the death of two of their splendid young officers, Field Cornets De Villiers and Lyon. De Villiers had scorned all screen and danger in his eagerness to come to close quarters with the enemy, and had several hand-to-hand combats with foemen during the morning. He was ultimately killed in one of the British attempts to regain the slope of Wagon Hill.

During the brief lull in the firing on Wagon Hill in the morning, the Harrismith men, under De Villiers, had made a dash across the open space between the trench they had taken and a redoubt from which a gun had been hurling shrapnel at the Boers along

the crest of the hill. The distance to the gun was no more than 150 yards, and it was resolved to try and silence its barking. Already several of the Tommies who were serving the piece had been picked off by the burghers, as head or hand or body showed an object for a Mauser to fire at. De Villiers gave the word, and a dozen other men leaped out and ran to the redoubt, shouting "Hands up!" to the twelve Tommies who were left out of those who had worked and defended the piece during the morning. The gun, an Armstrong, was spiked, the rifles were taken, and the Tommies released; De Villiers and his companions returning back to their comrades without the loss of a single man.

Chapter XXV

FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

COLONEL COUNT VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL—BIRTH AND CAREER—JOINS THE TRANSVAAL ARMY—HIS SERVICES AND DEATH AT BOSHOF—HOW THE BOER ARMIES WERE SERVED BY TWO FRENCHMEN—SATISFACTION FOR FASHODA

THE number of foreign volunteers who rendered service to the Boer armies, and the military value of such aid, have been greatly exaggerated in the English press. The purpose of this exaggeration was obvious from the beginning. British pride and prestige were hurt at the ludicrous failure of the boastful predictions about only a two months' campaign being required to dictate England's terms to President Kruger at Pretoria. Then it was seen that the astounding reverses experienced by superior British forces in the early stages of the campaign offered unmitigated satisfaction almost to every nation, in the same way that a good licking received by a big bully at the hands of a small antagonist delights every right-thinking onlooker. All this made the Jingo papers utilize the resources of fiction to explain these defeats, as they had already resorted to falsehoods in order to provoke the war. "We are not fighting the Boers, but all Europe," was the modest view of some Government organs, while others declared that "hundreds" of Continental officers and artillery experts had gone to South Africa before the outbreak of hostilities to prepare the Transvaal forces for the conflict against Great Britain.

I made a special study of the foreign volunteer element while in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and I can, therefore, speak with first-hand information upon one of the most interesting phases of the war. I have already dealt generally with the disputed point as to the number of men of Uitlander and foreign extraction who volunteered to fight for the Republics, and I will attempt in this and the following chapter to give a brief account of each corps, together with some particulars of the actual services rendered by them in the field.

COLONEL VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL

The most prominent, and by far the ablest, European officer who fought with the Federals was Colonel Count Villebois-Mareuil, whom I had the honor of meeting shortly after my arrival at Kroonstad. I found him to be a man of fifty or thereabouts, of medium height, strongly built, with a strangely fascinating face. The forehead was high, the eyes light blue, deep-set and penetrating in their glance, and overhung by finely-marked eyebrows; the nose was well formed, with large nostrils, and the mouth was almost concealed by a prominent, whitish mustache extending across the face; all combining to impart a handsome and distingué expression to a most magnetic personality. There was the impress of a nobility conferred by nature upon the man and his manner which did more than his rank or record to win for him on the instant an observer's favorable judgment. In demeanor and speech he possessed all the charm of a chivalrous soldier without the least suspicion of any motive, except of the highest purpose, animating his unselfish devotion to the cause which he had espoused. He spoke with the greatest contempt of England's objects in provoking the war, and considered that British officers had shown an astounding incapacity in each branch of the military service—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—throughout the whole campaign.

COLONEL VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL

Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil was born at Nantes of an old Breton family some fifty-two years ago. At the age of nine he was placed under the Jesuit Father Olivaint, at the noted College of Vaugirard. He graduated as Bachelor of Arts at the age of sixteen, and, being intended for a military career by his parents, he entered upon the preparatory studies necessary for admission to the College of St. Cyr. From all accounts he was a spirited student of his profession, and a leader in all athletic and manly exercises during his probation, and had no difficulty in acquiring the knowledge and proficiency which saw him leave the

famous military academy in 1868 with the epaulets of a Sous-Lieutenant.

His first military duty was rendered in Cochin China, whither he had been sent largely in obedience to his own desire for travel and adventure. After a brief service with the Colonial forces, he was selected as aide-de-camp by his uncle, Rear-Admiral Cornulier, then in command of the French Squadron in Eastern waters. Shortly afterward war between France and Germany was declared, and Villebois at once demanded to be allowed to go home. The admiral refused his permission, and the young lieutenant grew desperate at the thought that France was in deadly combat with a formidable foe while he was only a distant spectator of the conflict. One day, on seeing a French mail steamer ready to sail for Marseilles, he bluntly told his uncle that he would be passenger for France on board of that ship, and a consent which could no longer be refused was reluctantly given, Villebois leaving on the boat without five minutes' preparation.

On landing at Marseilles he found that the third Empire had fallen, and that whatever Government existed in France was located at Bordeaux. He proceeded at once to that city, demanded instant employment at the front, and in a few days' time found himself at the head of a company of young recruits, attached to the command of General Pourcet, to join whose forces he immediately started for Blois. At the battle of Blois, where the Germans were strongly posted behind street barricades, Villebois, in heading a bayonet charge for which he was specially selected by the general, so distinguished himself by coolness and conspicuous bravery in rescuing some guns and in capturing an important position that he was made captain, and decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honor on the field of battle. He had been severely wounded in leading the dashing charge which cleared the enemy from behind the barricades, but fought on until the day was won, when he had to be carried from the battle-field to hospital. The day following, an armistice was signed, and the war was terminated. The heroic young captain's victory was, in fact, the final action of the war. He was at this time only twenty-three years old. He served subsequently in Algiers, and took part in the Kroumirie expedition, when he again earned distinction for combined courage and capacity. He was very popular with the men of his various commands, and had the unique honor of being the youngest colonel in the French Army in his time.

Dissatisfied with the conduct of the various War Ministers of changing Governments, by whom he believed the French Army was being ruined, he resigned active service, retaining his rank

as colonel. He dropped the sword to take up the pen, and soon established another reputation as a clear and convincing writer in "Le Revue des Deux-Mondes," "Le Correspondent," "La Plume et L'Epée," and in various pamphlets, on topics such as the Russian Army, Russia and England in Asia, Organization of the Higher Commands in the French Army, Organization of Colonial Troops, Military Tradition and Vitality, Courts-Martial, Gallieni and Madagascar, the Centenary of Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt, The Sorrows of Spain, As Others See Us, The Colonial Achievements of the Third Republic, Our French Military Institutions and their Future, etc. He attended the re-trial of Captain Dreyfus at Rennes, and wrote his reflections upon that complicated case for "L'Action Française."

On the outbreak of war in South Africa he offered his services to the Boers, an offer which was readily accepted by Dr. Leyds, and, after committing his only child to the care of his brother, Viscount de Villebois-Mareuil, he sailed for Lourenzo Marquez, and reached Pretoria on the 1st of December, 1899.

By this time the English war correspondents had succeeded in placing "hundreds" of French, German, Russian, and other military officers and experts at the heads of Boer commandoes and in charge of Boer artillery, and had relegated rustic burgher generals to the background in the direction of such operations as had exhibited British troops flying from Dundee and surrendering by the thousand at Nicholson's Nek. Rumor had, however, reached the truth in the person of Villebois-Mareuil. There was soon woven around his attractive personality a legendary romance which represented him as the minister of poetic justice in the task of avenging Fashoda. He had reorganized the whole Boer plan of campaign, had planned the battle of Magersfontein, had actually commanded the burghers at Colenso, and was the military genius who was instrumental in making the Tugela a name of everlasting memory and of no little disgrace in British military annals. This was what the British press were saying of him in preference to admitting that their ablest generals and best troops were being beaten by Dutch farmers at the head of civilian fighters.

After staying a few days in Pretoria, where he had been shown very marked attention, Villebois left for Natal to pay his respects to General Joubert. He arrived in front of Ladysmith about the 7th of December, and was cordially welcomed by the old Commandant-General, who at once boasted of his own Breton ancestry and French blood. Villebois was not favorably impressed by Joubert. He saw in the head of the Boer army a candidate for the Presidency, a powerful politician, a man with a party, rather than a

soldier conscious of the responsibility involved in the direction of a force of 30,000 men engaged in a campaign against a huge Empire. He was probably more influenced in the formation of this view by his experiences of political generals in France than by Joubert's actual military shortcomings. In any case, the old man's nonchalant manners, his want of touch with the fighting commandoes in the South, and a seeming fatalistic dependence upon chance rather than upon aggressive and intelligent activity, disillusioned the expert military mind of the accomplished soldier, and caused him to form an opinion of Joubert's unfitness for the task he had in hand which subsequent intercourse and events turned into a permanent conviction.

He left Joubert's laager for the Tugela, and reached General Botha's camp on the 13th of December, a fact which completely disposes of the English theory that the battle of Colenso, on the 15th of that month, was fought upon Villebois' plans and suggestions. As a matter of fact he did not see Botha until the following day, when Buller's guns had commenced to bombard the positions in which the Boer general had already determined to meet and fight his antagonist. On the morning of the battle, as already related, he rode in an excited manner up to Botha, pointing to the enemy in actual motion across the plain, and anxiously exclaiming, "Where are your men, General? The enemy is about to attack." He soon learned that he had a man nearer to his own conception of an ideal Boer general in the young farmer than in the old commandant; and his confidence in and admiration of Botha increased with the progress of the campaign along the now famous river banks.

He reconnoitered the whole line of positions at the Tugela at Botha's express request, and expressed the opinion that it would require a force of 50,000 men to man properly and hold successfully so extensive a line of defensive ground. In his report to the Boer general he advised the seizure and occupation of Mounts Alice and Zwartskop, south of the river, near Potgieter's Drift, as positions which the enemy would probably make the pivots of their next attempt to reach Ladysmith. His advice was not acted upon, and within four days of the giving of it Buller's naval guns were firing from the two identical hills upon the burgher lines across the river.

Previous to this he had revisited the head laager at Ladysmith, and had made himself acquainted with the disposition of General White's forces, and the weak points in the English plan of defensive positions facing Joubert's lines of investment. He submitted a scheme for an attack upon the garrison, which he backed with a

strong expression of opinion in favor of a determined assault without delay. Joubert hesitated, delayed, vacillated, and Villebois returned to Colenso. Finally Joubert was induced to give his consent to the proposal, and I have related in the chapter on Ladysmith how near the plan was to being successful on the 6th of January. Villebois accompanied the Utrecht burghers, who rode from Colenso to take part in the storming of the Platrand, and was a spectator of the fight at Caesar's Camp during the progress of the general attack on the Platrand. He asserted afterward that suggestions which would have averted the blunders made in the carrying out of the plan of attack were disregarded in its execution; otherwise, the assault would have been successful.

He remained with Botha until the middle of January, when he left Natal to visit Cronje's army at Magersfontein, rightly divining that the west was soon to witness the great act of the war. This was his first visit to the scene of the battle which had been fought and won on the 11th of December, and the credit for the planning of which had been given to him by British papers. Cronje's military knowledge, as seen in the superior construction of his entrenchments and in the discipline of his camp, impressed Villebois very favorably. He was not slow, however, to recognize the autocratic manner and incurable obstinacy of the old Lion of Potchefstroom. He found him as polite and as grateful as Joubert for proffered suggestions, but even more slow and more proudly reluctant in the acceptance of any extraneous advice. This fatalistic stubbornness and Old Testament military pride filled him with forebodings of evil, as he saw clearly that the masterful inactivity which relied entirely upon this spirit and on defensive action would spell ruin to the small Federal armies in the end. He visited the forces in front of Kimberley, and was warmly welcomed by Generals Ferreira, Du Toit, and Kolbe, who treated him with marked respect, and showed more disposition to follow his advice than the officers with larger commands had exhibited. He was admitted to their kriegraads, and acted generally while in the lines there as military adviser to General Du Toit. After reconnoitering the whole of the English positions he prepared a plan for the delivery of an assault upon the city, which was fully discussed and agreed upon at a Council of War, the assault to be delivered after the arrival of the Long Tom which had been damaged at Ladysmith and repaired by Leon and Grunberg. General Cronje, however, was demanding the big Creusot for his own position at Magersfontein, and on the score of a quarrel among the generals over the possession of "Tom" came Du Toit's final refusal to assent to the projected assault. Villebois offered to lead an attack with fifty men, but could obtain

no sanction for his proposal. He left the lines in front of Kimberley for Bloemfontein, where, after an interview with President Steyn in which he forcibly expressed his fears of the consequences of Cronje's resolution to remain at Magersfontein in the face of Lord Roberts' obvious plans, he went to Colesberg to visit General De la Rey. He remained only a few days in Cape Colony. He formed a very high opinion of De la Rey's natural military ability, followed him to Bloemfontein when the news of Cronje's surrender arrived, and fought under him at Poplars Grove and Abram's Kraal; and remained with his commando until the Federal generals abandoned the Free State capital and retreated to the hills around Brandfort.

GENERAL KOLBE COLONEL MAXIMOFF

President Steyn told me in Kroonstad that, "had Cronje followed the advice which was given him by Villebois-Mareuil after he had inspected our lines at Magersfontein he would have reached Bloemfontein before the English, and have saved himself and us the disaster of Paardeberg."

Following the fall of Bloemfontein, Villebois, tired of offering advice which was generally disregarded, resolved to form a regiment of disciplined men out of the various bodies of foreign volunteers scattered among the Federal armies. All were willing to serve under him—Germans, Russians, Hollanders, Italians, Americans, Irish-Americans, and French—and his spirits rose at the prospect of having a body of European soldiers under his command with whom he could do the kind of work which found little favor with the Federals at that time—attacking the enemy, harassing his lines of communication, and charging with bayonets when opportunity should offer. Both

Governments approved of his plan, and the rank of Acting General was conferred upon him.

He selected his staff from the officers in command of the small bodies into which the foreign volunteers were divided. Colonel Maximoff, Captain Lorentz, Baron Von Wrangel, Lieutenants Reineke, De Breda, Gallopaud, and Smorenberg being so chosen.

While his regiment was being recruited and volunteers were arriving at his camp at Kroonstad to join his command, he intimated to President Steyn a wish to carry out some work which he had planned, and the execution of which would not brook of delay. He asked for and obtained a carload of dynamite, and with only 85 men—comprising 30 Frenchmen, with two lieutenants, 30 Hollanders, and the balance made up of various nationalities—he left Kroonstad at midnight on the 26th of March, for an unknown destination.

President Steyn alone knew that he had gone west to Hoopstad, but where he was to proceed from thence, and what to do, he had not confided to a single one of his officers or friends.

Two days after Villebois left Kroonstad, Baron Van Dedem arrived from France with despatches, and on a mission from the Count's friends. It being important that the letters from home should be delivered without delay, President Steyn wired to Hoopstad and arranged that Villebois was to meet the visitors from Europe at a wayside store, midway between the two towns. He was found there on the evening of the 30th of March, and was urged to return at once to France and endeavor to organize a European intervention; or, failing this, to band together 2,000 or 3,000 ex-*legionnaires* whom he had served with in Algiers, and sail openly, in a French ship, which would be provided, from Marseilles to Delagoa Bay. The view was strongly put before him that the moral and military effects of Cronje's surrender, coupled with the continued increase of the English forces, would render the operations of such a small foreign legion as he could organize out of difficult materials, of comparative little value against overwhelming odds. It was urged that the political effect of his presence in France, in the work of organizing European assistance, with his acquired knowledge of the Boer people and familiarity with their splendid fighting, would, on the contrary, be of enormous importance, and would far outweigh any help which he and his regiment could possibly render in the field. The true state of Continental feeling was explained to him; the growing militant indignation of the peoples at the naked baseness of the British in the war; the unity of German and French opinion in favor of the Boer

cause; and, especially, the strong current of popular hostility against England which was running through the public life of his own country. He listened with a keen, interested attention to all that was thus urged, and replied slowly and decisively:

"Had this proposal been placed before me six weeks ago, I would have acted upon it. Now it is impossible. The Boers have met with a first, but a vital, reverse. Cronje's surrender means the defeat of the Republics. The war will be over in July. I could do nothing in Europe within that time, as the journey is very long. Moreover, the Boers, as you will learn, are a suspicious people. They are very liable to misunderstand the actions of their best friends. They would not comprehend my going away now, so soon after the great misfortune of Paardeberg. I might be thought capable of leaving them when their prospects are clouded with the shadow of the enemy's first real triumph over them in the field. No; I came to offer my services to these people. They have won my affectionate admiration. They are half French in origin, and with them I shall remain to the end."

And in this fatal decision ended the hopes and the labors of the mission from France.

The motives which inspired this doubly unfortunate refusal were above question. They were worthy of a high-minded, chivalrous soldier, morally afraid of having the sincerity of his ardent sympathies subjected to the ordeal of suspicion, and the unkind Fates determined the rest, to the great injury of the Boer cause, and to the permanent loss of the French nation.

As he could not be persuaded to return to Europe to organize a Continental intervention, and, if necessary, a really effective French legion, he was induced to address a manifesto to the *legionnaires* who had served under him in Algiers. To this suggestion he readily assented, and wrote the following appeal:

"To the Legionnaires Who Have Known Me!

"Comrades, Officers, Non-commissioned officers, and Soldiers—I know that you have not forgotten me. You have been in my memory and affection. We understand each other, and, therefore, I address this appeal to you.

"There lies beyond the Vaal River a brave people, small in numbers, who are threatened with the deprivation of their liberties, their rights, and their belongings, in order that greedy and grasping capitalists may prosper.

"These people in a large proportion have French blood running in their veins. France, therefore, owes them, in their hour of need, a striking manifestation of its assistance.

"Comrades! Your natural temperament, your true soldierly instincts, impelled you to range yourselves beneath the flag of

France, even without the impulse of national obligation, and it is to you I look for the aid which is due from France to a kindred race manfully fighting against overwhelming numbers for the preservation of its independence.

"You have remained to me the perfect type of troops, always ready and eager for attack without a moment's self-consideration; troops without rivals in impetuosity for an assault.

"Such soldiers trained to these methods are wanting here. We have unrivaled shooters for a deadly defense. We do not possess the disciplined force necessary to complete a victory when the enemy has been repulsed or beaten; troops to rush in and deliver a crushing blow.

"Comrades! Come to me. You'll find your colonel as ready to lead you as you have known him always to be, and your coming will give him that supreme satisfaction in fighting this just cause which your absence from his side on the field of battle has alone denied him, the honor of leading you within striking distance of the enemy.

"Group yourselves according to military rules. Leave France as citizens traveling for their own purposes. I will receive you here, and I promise you that very few days will elapse before we shall show the world the mettle of which the French Legionnaire is made.

"VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL.

"Kroonstad, March 30, 1900."

The general, attended by a solitary guide, rode back to Hoopstad on the following day, and rejoined his small force at Driefontein. No one knew his plan or ultimate objective. He was anxious to know what the enemy's strength was near Boshof, and marched in that direction after being informed that the English in that town numbered only 300. The help of a body of 200 men who were in laager north of Driefontein was promised him at Hoopstad. Later and more accurate information represented the English as being in much greater force on his front; but this seems to have been disregarded by him as an invention by the burghers who were reluctant to accompany him. He was warned after this not to proceed, and the Boers who had promised him refused to go with his little band. Nothing, however, would deter him from advancing to where Fate had reserved for him a soldier's death and grave. The troop rode forward, and halted for the evening at the bottom of a small wooded kopje, to which he had been led by two guides procured at Hoopstad. After a while, on asking for the guides, he was told they had vanished! He then saw he had been betrayed and led into a trap. Before he had time to realize the full gravity of the situation, British troops were observed at a distance

in the act of surrounding the position where the volunteers had intended to bivouac for the night. The general at once disposed of his men in two sections, placing the Hollanders on one ridge and the Frenchmen, with himself among them, on the wooded kopje. Sangars were hastily erected, such as the nature of the ground offered, and the attack was awaited.

Accounts of what followed vary in their details, but all reports agree that the example of Villebois in his coolness and utter disregard of danger stimulated the little troop to keep up a contest for over three hours with Lord Methuen's 3,000 or 4,000 troops and six guns. The Hollanders, on seeing the utter hopelessness of the situation, surrendered by laying down their arms. Villebois scornfully refused to make any such appeal to a British force, and he sternly rebuked all suggestion of surrender around where he stood. The fight continued, shells exploding against the positions on which the little legion loyally remained with the general. Suddenly a portion of a shell struck him in the head, and he was instantly killed, falling dead without a word. The English now rushed the kopje, and the seventy survivors were taken prisoner. Three French volunteers besides the general were killed, while ten others were wounded; the enemy losing about as many.

English officers admitted to some of the prisoners that they had been informed of the strength of Villebois' force and of the direction of his march after he had left Hoopstad; confirming the general belief which obtained among the Boer laagers that the legion had been the victim of some one's treachery.

This ending of the general's scheme of a European legion and of his own career made a deep impression on the burghers. They had a profound respect for him personally, and were grateful for his earnest efforts to give them all the help in his power. The Boer officers saw clearly that he was wedded to European ideas of warfare, in a country and under conditions where these ideas did not always apply, and this fact, coupled with a stranger's ignorance of the Boer language and of the regions which were the theater of operations, made it impossible for him to give all the assistance which he was passionately desirous of rendering to a cause that had won his heart.

Much surprise has been expressed by those who knew of his customary careful and even cautious disposition that he should have erred so much in judgment and tact in venturing towards where he ought to have known that large forces of the enemy must be located. This view, however, has been taken without fully considering the part which treachery had played in the catastrophe of the 6th of April, and in ignorance of his actual plans and inten-

tions. The most far-seeing of human judgments are not proof against the mysterious agencies of fate nor the accidents of fortune, and the true French spirit and heroic resolve which he proudly exhibited, to die as a soldier rather than live as an English prisoner, will more than redeem in the national recollection of Frenchmen, and in the grateful memory of the Boer generation, the incautious action which led to the death of Villebois-Mareuil.

The following documents speak with two English voices of the memorable death thus recorded :

"Boshof, May 10, 1900.

"Mademoiselle—I am forwarding you a photograph of a marble stone which I have placed in the churchyard at Boshof in memory of your father. I hope I have found the ring he wore, and if it proves to be so it shall also be sent to you. I could not place your father's body in a Roman Catholic churchyard, as I feel sure you would have wished, but the funeral rites were carried out by M. le Comte de Breda, and military honors were accorded to the colonel. We all regret the death of an accomplished and gallant soldier, but he preferred death to becoming a prisoner. Let me convey to you my sympathy and the sympathy of my comrades in your sorrow. Very truly,

"METHUEN, Lt.-Gen., Cmdg. 5th Division."

"The Daily News," October 30, 1900.

"The shell which killed General de Villebois-Mareuil near Boshof has been mounted as a trophy in an ebony case, and is to be presented to Lord Galway and the officers of the Sherwood Rangers, Imperial Yeomanry, to commemorate their first engagement. It is now on view at Macmichael's 42 South Audley street, W., London."

On the eve of my departure from Pretoria I received the following message from General Botha :

"Van Hoofed Commandant-General Botha, Standerton.

"Aan Michael Davitt, Pretoria.

"When are you leaving and what will be your address in Europe ? I would very much like to send you a letter for Mademoiselle de Villebois-Mareuil, which I should be glad if you would deliver personally. Please reply to Standerton."

When the reply reached Standerton the general had left for the Free State to meet the advance of Lord Roberts' army.

MESSRS. GRUNBERG AND LEON

In 1895 a young Frenchman, by name Leon Grunberg, a graduate of L'École Centrale of Paris, was sent to South Africa by the

great French firm of Schnieder and Co. as their representative. This famous company was the manufacturer of mining machinery of all kinds, as well as the makers of the celebrated Creusot guns and other artillery. Leon Grunberg's mission to Johannesburg was entirely pacific, in being confined to the sale of material required in the working of the Rand mines. In December of that year the Jameson Raid occurred, revealing, in its naked purpose of deliberate plunder under the protection of the British flag, an English design to grab the mines and to annex the Republic to the Empire. The Transvaal Executive saw at once the necessity for arming the Republic against the eventuality of a greater raid than Jameson's, and two batteries of artillery were ordered in 1897 from the Creusot works in France.

M. LEON GRUNBERG

With these guns there came to Pretoria M. Sam Leon, a schoolfellow of Grunberg's, also an engineer, and on taking stock of the situation Leon and Grunberg formed themselves into a firm of military engineers, and offered their services to the Boer Government. They were readily accepted.

General Joubert's reluctance to embark in any large scheme of armaments was overcome by the more apprehensive and more alert members of the Executive, backed by warnings from Europe, and Mauser and Lee-Metford rifles, with additional artillery, were bought in England and on the Continent in 1897-98. Forts were constructed round Pretoria, and one to dominate Johannesburg; three being built under the direction of Colonel Schiel, and the Fort Daspoortrand, to the west of the capital, by Grunberg and Leon.

When war was declared in 1899, it became the task of the two Frenchmen to instruct the Staats Artillery officers in the use of the large and small ordnance which, chiefly on their advice, the Boer Executive had acquired, and Sam Leon became an indispensable adjunct to the gunnery staff of Joubert's army. He organized the service for each piece, taught the artillerists how best to place their guns where positions were to be held, and to build scientifically-constructed protection for the less mobile pieces required for siege

purposes. All the guns employed round Ladysmith were so fixed under his superintendence; platforms were erected on his plans, and all other needful details attended to as he advised.

He accompanied Pretorius and Wolmarans in the charge of Botha's guns during part of the Tugela campaign, and arranged the positions held by the five pieces which did such execution against the English at Colenso. He went from the Tugela to the siege of Kimberley to erect the platform for the "Long Tom" which had been "knocked out" at Ladysmith in the midnight sortie of the British, as related; the huge gun having been fully repaired subsequently at Pretoria by Grunberg and himself.

It was on the 12th of February, 1900, while engaged in sighting this gun during a duel with the Kimberley artillery, that a bullet struck him in the head and maimed him for life. His eye was destroyed, and he was compelled to return to France.

Meanwhile, as far back as November, the store of artillery ammunition ordered by Joubert before the commencement of hostilities was running out, owing to the enormous waste occasioned by the sieges of Ladysmith, Mafeking, and Kimberley; operations which did not enter into Boer calculations when the original orders were being placed. The situation was most alarming, as no further supply of shells for Creusots, howitzers, or pom-poms could be imported, and Joubert was confronted with the appalling prospect of a famine in projectiles, and the consequent uselessness of all his artillery.

At this critical juncture President Kruger's wisdom and foresight in preserving the dynamite monopoly for the Transvaal was fully realized, when Grunberg assured the Government that cordite and all kinds of smokeless ammunition could be made at the factory at Modderfontein. A terrible fear was thus dispelled, and those who had doubted the old President's wisdom in resisting Mr. Chamberlain's audacious demand for the abolition of the explosives' monopoly, now rendered a grateful tribute of admiration to the prescience of Oom Paul.

Two foundries owned by Begbie and by Wright and Co. in Johannesburg, which were used for the making and repairing of mining machinery, were at once commandeered by the Government, and Grunberg set to work to turn these places into ammunition factories. His difficulties were enormous, in the want of proper machinery, tools, and molds, but especially in skilled mechanics. Nothing, however, seemed impossible to the resourceful engineer, who had thrown a warm French heart into the work of serving a people who were largely French in their origin, and, with the exercise of untiring industry, marvelous skill, and a creative enthu-

siasm, all difficulties were fought down. By the end of November, 1899, Grunberg had already despatched his first 1,000 shells from Johannesburg to the front. Smokeless powder and other explosives were supplied from the State factory, and the workshops of the city of sinister omen were soon enabled to turn out better projectiles for all the guns than those which had been imported from Europe.

Five hundred hands, mostly Italians, with French, Austrian, and a few American workmen added, were gradually instructed by Grunberg, and so efficient did he render his men and means in supplying the Federal artillery with ammunition that 1,000 shells per day were finished during the six months from November, 1899, to May, 1900. Shells for the English Armstrong guns, taken at Colenso and elsewhere, and for the Maxim-Nordenfelts, were produced as required; the supply being continued for the Free State forces as well as for those of the Transvaal.

This work, which had saved the Federal armies from finding all their artillery without ammunition early in the conflict, was not carried on without attracting the malevolent attention of British citizens and partisans who had been permitted, under various pretexts and guises, to remain in Johannesburg and Pretoria during the whole period of the war, under the futile obligation of an oath of allegiance. In January a Reuter's message from Lourenzo Marquez reported in some detail "the complete destruction of Begbie's foundry" by dynamite, the deed being attributed to anti-Boer action. The news was only a too previous anticipation of events, as no explosion took place at that time. The plot had miscarried, probably owing to imperfect preparations. This circumstance naturally alarmed M. Grunberg, who demanded a better surveillance of the works for the protection of the employees; but, strange to relate, very little was done to satisfy his request, the plea being that all the burghers were at the front fighting.

In addition to the numerous spies who were disguised under protective callings, there were scores of families of English and Colonial citizenship allowed to stay in Johannesburg all through the war, partly owing to the necessity of working those mines which the Government had commandeered in order to obtain from their operations money with which to prosecute the war. There were few burghers available for this labor, and many potential enemies of sinister and unscrupulous reputation remained, in consequence, as actual residents in the city upon which the Boer armies were dependent for their entire artillery ammunition. All these had sworn an oath of neutrality after war had been declared, but oaths lie with light moral obligation upon consciences absolved of such trifles by the inherent righteousness which always vindicates

the acts of a certain class of Englishmen when engaged in the beneficent work of teaching other peoples the blessings of British rule to the destruction of their own.

M. Grunberg called Commandant Shutte's attention to these facts, and to the absence of all intelligent inspection of houses in Marshall street, opposite Begbie's foundry, all to no purpose. So, about five in the afternoon of April 24, an explosion which shook the whole of Johannesburg occurred at the shell factory, and it was thought that the entire place was destroyed. The authors of the fell deed had not, however, killed M. Grunberg, as they had succeeded in killing a number of poor Italian working men, who were blown to atoms in the explosion. Experts in explosives estimated that 1,000 pounds of dynamite must have been used to do the damage which followed, and to dig a huge pit twenty feet deep in the ground where the main force of the dynamite had expended itself. No dynamite had been stored by Grunberg or the Government in or near the foundry. The agency of destruction had been placed by the plotters from time to time in an empty house opposite the works, and had been carried there after dark from some of the mines in which English agents, disguised and designated as "Americans," were employed. A storage of powder which stood between the empty house and the main yard of Begbie's works was blown up as a result of the fire caused by the dynamite explosion, and the theory advanced against the charge of direct English agency attempted to attribute to the effect of the powder explosion the cause and explanation of the main disaster.

M. Grunberg had a miraculous escape, being at the time in the office, which was only about 200 feet from where the house which had been used by the dynamitards had stood, and receiving only a few bruises from falling timber. The whole foundry and buildings appeared to be in ruins, save the stone walls of the sheds and the machinery. These had withstood the terrific shock, and inside of one week this wonder-working Frenchman had overcome all the difficulties and discouragement caused by the explosion and the killing of so many of his workmen, and was again turning out an ample supply of ammunition for the guns. And so the work continued until Lord Roberts' army, in its advance on Johannesburg at the end of May, forced one of the truest heroes of the Boer war to lay down his task and to take his seat in the last (Boer) train which left Pretoria for Lourenzo Marquez.

M. Grunberg can, if he wishes, console himself with the reflection that he, at any rate, has very amply avenged Fashoda. After Cronje's surrender, while depression had sent thousands of Boers from the laagers to their homes, the Boer artillery remained in the

front line keeping the enemy at a distance until the patriotism of the Boer women had compelled husbands and sons and brothers to shoulder their Mausers again and quit their farms in defense of these homes and of Transvaal independence. Grunberg's work in that improvised factory in Johannesburg had enabled the fighting burghers to hold the field until the combative spirit which had been discouraged by the calamity of Paardeberg had returned again to the people; and thus the memorable campaign of De Wet, De la Rey, Botha, Hertzog, Brand, Viljoen, and others may be said to have grown out of the labors of a single Frenchman's genius and devotion—as well as the cost in taxes, lives, injury, and prestige which it has entailed upon the hereditary enemy of France.

Chapter XXVI

BLAKE'S IRISH BRIGADE

THE SECOND IRISH BRIGADE—THE CHICAGO IRISH-AMERICAN CORPS—AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS—THE HOLLANDER CORPS—THE GERMAN CORPS—THE ITALIAN CORPS—THE SCANDINAVIAN CORPS—RUSSIAN SCOUTS—AMBULANCE HELP FOR THE BOER ARMIES

I HAVE no intention of writing a narrative of Blake's Irish Brigade, or of doing more than giving my readers a bare outline of its organization and record. The task of recounting its labors in the war belongs to some member of the corps, intimate with the personnel of its members and with the part they have played in the campaign. I have not had that advantage, and cannot, therefore, do justice to this small body of Irishmen, who, in helping to prevent the consummation of one of the greatest and most sordid crimes of human history, have rendered an honorable service to the race to which they belong.

COLONEL JOHN FRANKLIN BLAKE

Not alone every commando and brigade, but every company in an army has its own individuality in the military organism, and, necessarily, its own story of its deeds, adventures, triumphs, and reverses, as a fighting unit of the general body. To recount all that is thus achieved in a detail which would do even bare justice to every section of the Boer armies, would need not one but fifty volumes, and this is, I hope, a sufficient reason why I do not here attempt to relate all that Blake's men did for liberty in the name of Ireland in South Africa. The little which I have to say, moreover, is not written from the point of view of the brigade, but from

that of the Boer officers and officials from whom my information about the corps has been almost exclusively derived.

The Irish Brigade was organized in Johannesburg chiefly by the exertions of Mr. John M'Bride, a native of Mayo, who was at the time employed as assayer in one of the Rand mines. He was warmly supported by other prominent Irishmen on the Rand. A manifesto was issued appealing to Irishmen to remember England's manifold infamies against their own country, and on this account to volunteer the more readily to fight against a common enemy for the defense of Boer freedom. Meetings were held, and recruiting began; the Boer Executive lending its encouragement to the proposed formation of a corps other than the field cornetcies and commandoes provided for in the regular burgher military system. The colonelcy was given to Mr. John Franklin Blake, an ex-West Point graduate and officer, who had seen service in the Sixth U. S. Cavalry Regiment in Arizona. Colonel Blake resided for a few years in Michigan after resigning from the army, and engaged in a railroad business. His life in this occupation was not what his adventurous disposition demanded, and he made his way to South Africa in search of a more exciting career than that of managing railway traffic. He was attracted to Rhodesia after the grabbing of that country from the Matabele, and the subsequent press laudation of its alleged mines and resources by Mr. Cecil Rhodes' various booming agencies. Blake rode over most of the country, studied it thoroughly, and wrote a series of descriptive letters in American and London papers of what he had seen and learned, which made the barrenness of the Chartered Company's territories so widely known that the boom did not realize all that its authors expected to reap from the gullible public.

"IRISH WILLIE"

The mascot of the Irish-American Brigade, missing since the fight at Sand River, but sure to turn up

Blake arrived in Johannesburg shortly before the Jameson Raid, and attracted attention at once by the reputation which his exposure of the Rhodesian fictions had made, and by his genial character and many accomplishments. He is a man of forty or fifty, six

feet high, athletic in build, with a slight suggestion of Buffalo Bill in his general appearance and bearing. He is the best of "jolly good fellows" in a social sense, a great favorite with the ladies, and a fine all-round type of an American soldier.

The chief duty assigned to the Brigade in the operations before Ladysmith was that of a guard to the artillery under Commandant Trichardt, and I have already made reference to the signal service rendered by Blake's men in discharging that duty at the battle of Modderspruit. Sections of the corps took part in many of the engagements during the Natal campaign, volunteers being always ready for any fighting which Boer plans or British attacks demanded.

Had the Transvaal Republic an equivalent decoration to the English Victoria Cross, that distinction would have been conferred upon one of Blake's men, named O'Reilly, for his action during the battle of Colenso. The occasion of this exceptional bravery has been briefly described by Villebois-Mareuil in his diary. It was during the desperate efforts which were being made by Hildyard's officers, under Buller's own immediate incentive, to save the twelve guns which Colonel Long had rushed in towards the Boer fighting lines, in a frantic attempt to stop the tide of burgher triumph, then sweeping along the entire battle-field. The enemy's other guns were turned upon that part of Botha's center from where the Krugersdorp men were directing a concentrated fire upon Long's batteries. Villebois-Mareuil, who was witnessing the fine performance of the burghers, relates how he became anxious about a vacant position to the left of the men who were attacking the service of the English guns, and was about to suggest to the general that the place should be occupied as a support to the Krugersdorpers, when he found his idea anticipated by Botha, who had ordered some of the Middelburg men to strengthen the lines at that place. These men swept across the open space to the right, which was being literally raked by the British guns at the time, and took up the required position "in a superb manner," as Villebois described it. A few men of Blake's Brigade were included in these reenforcements, and, as they were in the very act of crossing the zone of fire, Major M'Bride's horse stumbled, and threw him to the ground. O'Reilly wheeled round amidst the hail of shells, and put his horse between M'Bride and the English gunners until his friend had regained the saddle, both escaping, as if by a miracle, without a scratch. It was as courageous an act as ever won a hero's reward.

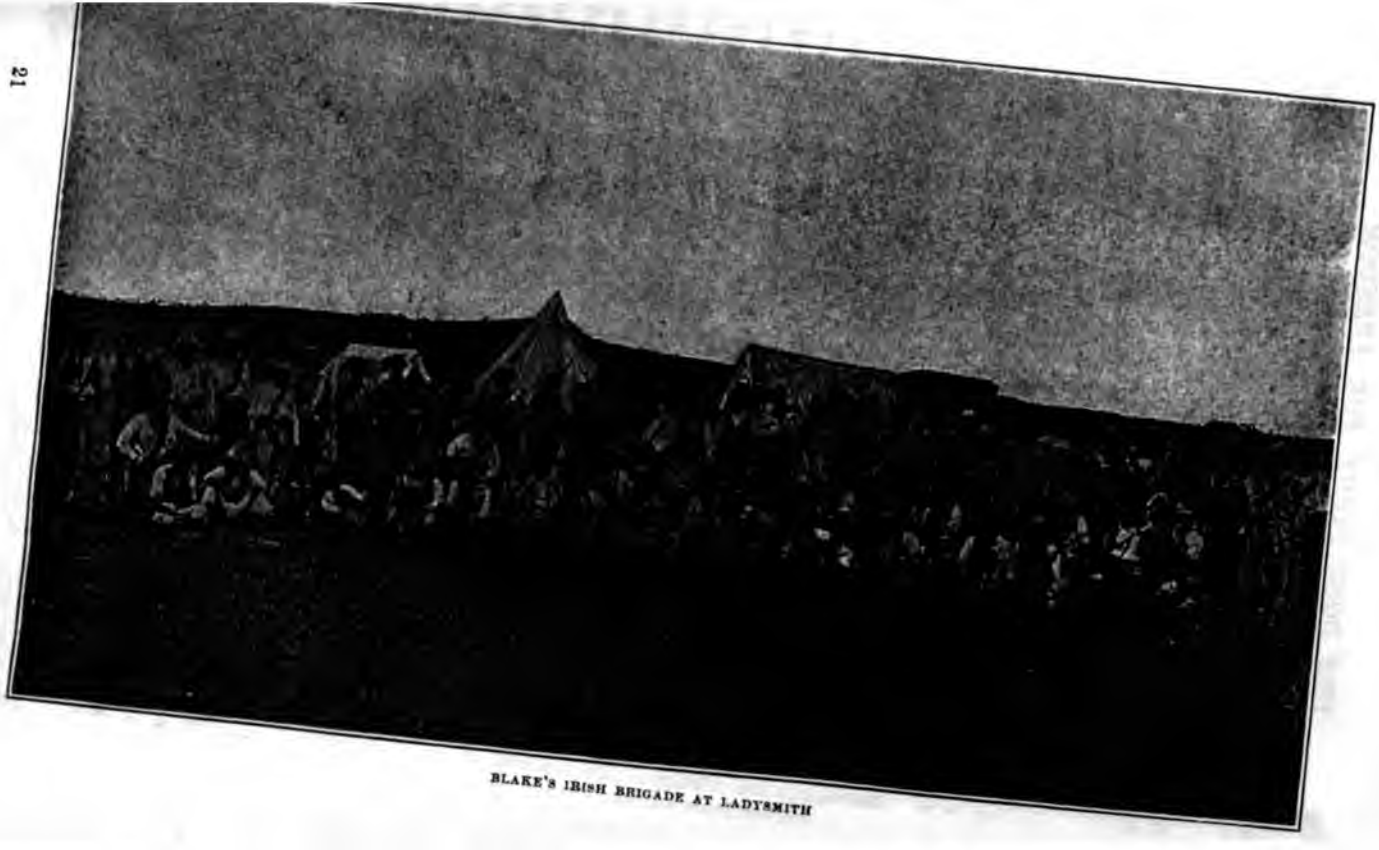
When Roberts began his great movement north from Bloemfontein, General Botha ordered the Irish Brigade from Natal to

Brandfort, and the men took part in whatever fighting occurred during the disheartening retirement of the burgher forces from thence to Pretoria. Again, in the actions fought by Botha between Pretoria and Dalmanutha, along the Delagoa Bay Railway, the Irishmen performed their share of the work of holding the British forces back. After the prolonged battle of Dalmanutha the Brigade disbanded, the majority returning to America. Blake, however, remained behind, resolved to see the conflict through to the end. He has been engaged during the recent and present campaign of guerrilla warfare in work which appeals to his love of daring adventure and contempt for climatic difficulties, and the cheery, optimistic, warm-hearted ex-frontiersman will be found to be one of the last men to lay down his arms against England while a shot can be fired or a deed can be done in legitimate warfare against the enemy of Transvaal and of Irish independence.

A few other members of the Brigade have also remained, and are fighting with De la Rey and Ben Viljoen. Those who returned to America were in no way tired of the war or wishful to leave the service they had gratuitously rendered to the cause of Boer freedom. Both State Secretary Reitz, General Botha, and General Ben Viljoen gave Major M'Bride and his companions very handsomely worded testimonials of appreciation and of thanks for their gallant work, and they have returned to their homes with the consciousness of having unselfishly fought for as noble a cause and as heroic a people as ever appealed to and obtained the hearty help of liberty-loving Irishmen.

There were many more men of Irish blood scattered through the Transvaal and Free State commandoes than were included in Blake's corps. I have found Irish names in the records of almost all the engagements fought over the wide field of the two Republics. President Steyn told me that "all the Catholics and Irishmen of the Free State were loyally with the Federal cause from the beginning," and I am therefore encouraged in the belief that the number of my fellow-countrymen who honored our race in offering to shed their blood for the freedom of two little Protestant Republics is larger than the numerical strength of Blake's and Lynch's Brigades would indicate.

The Brigade lost about ten killed during the campaign, and a small number are among the prisoners in Ceylon or St. Helena. Each member entered the Boer army as a burgher of the Transvaal; a special law having been passed by the Volksraad fully enfranchising every Uitlander who volunteered to defend the Republic. The few Irishmen who are in the hands of the English are, therefore, protected by the recognized rules of civilized warfare against what



BLAKE'S IRISH BRIGADE AT LADYSMITH

would otherwise be a savage resort to British vengeance against "rebels" to the authors of the war.

Blake's Brigade had an average muster roll of 120 men. It numbered some 200 at one time, and was under 100 after the siege of Ladysmith.

THE SECOND IRISH BRIGADE

A second brigade was formed in January, 1900, by a few of Blake's corps, in conjunction with Mr. Arthur Lynch, an Irish-Australian who had gone to the Transvaal as war correspondent for "Le Journal," of Paris. Like Colonel Maximoff and several American journalists, Mr. Lynch was captivated by the heroic character of the Boer struggle against such cruel odds, and he threw away the pen for a Mauser rifle. A few officers of Blake's corps were desirous of creating another Irish Brigade, with, doubtless, the laudable ambition of increasing the number of bodies with Irish names in so good a cause, and Mr. Lynch was induced to join in the enterprise. He was elected to the post of colonel, and being an able linguist, speaking French and German with fluency, he succeeded in enlisting about 150 "Irishmen" from several European nationalities, not hitherto reckoned as subordinate members of the Celtic racial family. Colonel Lynch soon earned such a reputation for capacity and for looking carefully after the comforts of his men that numbers of volunteers from other commandoes were induced to join the second "Irish" Brigade, which in this way became at one time as strong numerically as that organized by Major M'Bride.

COLONEL ARTHUR LYNCH (STANDING), CAPTAIN OATES (ON HORSEBACK)

Colonel Lynch is a young man aged about thirty-five, tall, handsome, and accomplished. He is a graduate of the Melbourne University, and is in every sense, physically and intellectually, a worthy representative of the Australian-born sons of Ireland. He proved himself to be an able commander, and enjoyed the confidence of General Botha, who spoke of him to me as "one of the very best

COLONEL LYNCH'S (THE 2ND IRISH) BRIGADE

of my officers." The part which the second Irish Brigade played in the campaign is, I believe, to be told by Colonel Lynch in a narrative of the war as he witnessed it, both as a war correspondent and as an officer, and I must therefore leave to his better-informed knowledge the task of recording the full story of the corps which he commanded.

In the retreat of Joubert from Ladysmith to Glencoe, Lynch and his men fought in the rear guard, and were several times in action. The Brigade remained attached to General Lukas Meyer's command in Natal until the whole of what had been the army of the Tugela and of the siege of Ladysmith retired north through Laing's Nek; Lynch and his men on one occasion being instrumental in saving some of Ben Viljoen's guns from capture by Buller's forces. After the re-entry of Meyer's commandoes into the Transvaal, Lynch's Brigade were ordered to Vereeniging, but became disbanded in Johannesburg when passing through that city. Lynch and the few Irishmen who were in his corps went to the Vaal River, and joined the remnants of the various commandoes and brigades who were fighting with Botha, Steyn, and De la Rey to resist the advance of Roberts' huge army. All fell back first on Johannesburg, then on Pretoria.

It being now resolved to change the whole character of the campaign into a system of warfare in which Europeans with no intimate knowledge of the Transvaal could render little or no assistance in separate military organizations, Colonel Lynch left for Europe with many other volunteers, and has since his return to Paris continued to render excellent service to the Boer cause in letters and articles, full of first-hand information, to the French press and magazines.

In the fall of 1901 Colonel Lynch was selected by the Nationalist leaders of Ireland as a candidate for Parliament. He stood to represent Galway and was overwhelmingly elected, receiving three votes to every one cast for his opponent. He has not yet (March, 1902) been advised to attempt to take his seat. This election, together with the involuntary cheers in Parliament given by some of the Irish members on receipt of the news of Lord Methuen's capture and defeat by De la Rey, has exasperated the British Government beyond measure. These demonstrations of Irish sympathy with the Boer cause have arrested universal attention, and awakened a wide European interest in the relations existing between Ireland and England.

Colonel Lynch's chief officers were Major Mitchel, a Galway man, and Captain Oates, of Kerry, whose fine boy, Tom, was killed at Modderspruit. In subordinate posts this unique brigade had repre-

sentatives of every European country, with one or two Americans, completing the most thoroughly cosmopolitan body which was ever commanded by an Irish or any other officer. There was Ireland, America, Australia, the Transvaal, Free State, Cape Colony, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Austria, Russia, Greece, and Bulgaria represented in this second "Irish" corps, which, to complete its unprecedented representativeness, embraced a solitary Englishman, who fought for right and justice against his own country's forces. I visited Colonel Lynch's laager while in Natal early in May, 1900, and can bear personal testimony to the true soldierly manner in which his well-equipped camp was organized, and to his popularity as an officer among his Continental and universal "Irishmen."

THE CHICAGO IRISH-AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS

This small contingent of volunteers was spoken of in Pretoria as the "finest-looking" body of men that had yet reached the Transvaal capital from abroad. They numbered about forty, excluding the medicos and non-combatants, and were all young men of splendid physique and of the best soldierly qualities. They were under the command of Captain O'Connor, of the Clan-na-Gael Guards, and joined Blake's Irish Brigade. President Kruger extended a special reception to the company, and addressed them in complimentary terms before they started for the front.

Lord Roberts was on the point of advancing from Bloemfontein when the Chicago men arrived, and they were hurried forward to Brandfort along with other reenforcements for De la Rey, who was in command until the arrival of Botha. O'Connor and his men acquitted themselves most creditably in all the rear-guard actions fought from Brandfort to Pretoria; Viljoen's Rand Brigade, Blake's and O'Connor's men, with Hassell's scouts, doing their share of fighting in all the engagements during events and occurrences which were well calculated to damp the enthusiasm of the allies of the Boer cause. It is, however, under trying circumstances, offering little or no compensation for services or sacrifice, save what comes from the consciousness of a duty well performed, that men are best tested in mind and metal, and the work done during that most disheartening time was worth many a more successful campaign fought under brighter hopes for the cause of liberty.

During the several engagements which led up to the three or four days' fighting around Dalmanutha, two members of the corps were killed, Messrs. O'Hara and Egan; the former nobly sacrificing himself to save his comrades in a critical moment. He was a native of West Limerick.

THE CHICAGO IRISH-AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS

× Colonel Blake

The names of the members of the Chicago corps are as follows, tho the list is not given as being accurate:

Captain Patrick O'Connor, Lieutenant Michael Enright, John J. Quinn, William Dwyer, Hugh B. Ryan, Thomas Murray, Patrick J. Griffin, James E. Coyne, Edward G. Healy, W. MacTeigue, Thomas Cashel, John Costello, Daniel Daley, Hubert O'Hara, James Slattery, John A. Murphy, Edward Hawkins, John Welsh, John Duff, William Hurley, Joseph Rickard, Patrick Carroll, Richard Morrissey, Daniel Foley, John J. Rogers, Edward M. Egan, Michael C. O'Hara, Richard J. Cahill, James Hill, Daniel MacHugh, Frederick Varslius, R. Linchloter, Michael Davy, Thomas Naughten.

The doctors who accompanied the corps in an ambulance capacity, and rendered professional service to both Boer and volunteer forces were: Messrs. H. R. Macaulay, A. F. Conroy, Ross D. Long, J. J. Slattery, and E. Aderholdt. These medical gentlemen brought with them to Pretoria a splendidly-equipped ambulance service, which had been supplied by the generous action of the United Irish Societies of Chicago and their friends.

AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS

America contributed very few volunteers to the Boer cause, if those of German and of Irish-American origin are not included. There were, I believe, a larger number on the English side, especially in the later stages of the war. Probably 100 would represent the total number of American citizens, not counting Irish or German-Americans, in the Transvaal service. After the relief of Ladysmith most of these, along with some naturalized Germans, were organized into a scouting corps by Captain John Hassell, a native of New Jersey. Hassell had fought through the whole of the Natal operations, and was twice wounded. When I visited his camp at Brandfort in May, 1900, he had some Texan cowboys, four or five newspaper correspondents who "had come to write and who remained to fight," as they expressed it, together with several celebrities in his command, whose war and scouting adventures would in themselves make excellent copy for half-a-dozen chapters. Hassell was a smart, soldierly-looking young fellow, as resourceful and courageous as Americans of the true-grit brand are known to be wherever the best qualities of a sturdy manhood are called for.

And the disinterestedness of these brave spirits is shown by the fact that they gave aid to a seemingly hopeless cause at a time when England, to quote Kipling,

"Fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who could shoot and ride."

THE HOLLANDER CORPS

This body of volunteers was the largest of the foreign legions, and was mostly recruited from the Rand. Jan Lombard, member of the Second Raad for Johannesburg, was its Commandant, and, as he and his compatriots desired to fight an English army by themselves, they fared very badly in consequence on the field of Elandslaagte. The corps gained in that engagement a deserved reputation for pluck but not for judgment, and scarcely recovered again, as

THE HOLLANDER CORPS LEAVING PRETORIA FOR THE FRONT

a separate fighting force, the fine morale with which it commenced its career. A good number of Hollanders were included in the "Zarps," or Johannesburg Police, the bravest fighters of the war, and the parent land of the Boers probably rendered more effective help through its representatives in that splendid body of men than through the more assertive, if less renowned, corps which was so badly mauled by General French on the 20th of October, 1899. The valiant Zarps were mainly young Boers, but included a strong Hollander element, a good number of Germans, and a few Irish.

The Hollander Corps itself had a strength of about 500. Many of these, however, were employed in guarding British prisoners at Pretoria and Waterval, and in other non-combative capacities.

Fully 200 additional Hollanders would be found in the other commandoes, and in Viljoen's Rand Brigade. Then there were telegraphists, cycle despatch riders, and clerks, who rendered most useful service to the active forces in the field. Probably 200 volunteers, chiefly non-commissioned officers, went out expressly from Holland to join the Transvaal forces. Altogether Hollanders to the number of 1,000 must have rendered help in the various ways mentioned to the Boer armies during the war.

General Botha's military secretary during the Tugela campaign and up to the battle of Dalmanutha was a most able young Hollander, J. C. Sandberg, a brave soldier, an accomplished linguist, resourceful organizer, and an all-round indefatigable worker, to whom I am under many obligations for facts and information relating to the Tugela campaign.

It was a Hollander officer in charge of the soldiers who surrendered at Nicholson's Nek that told me the excellent story of the good-natured Tommy whom he found one morning doing "sentry go" over his own comrades. "Don't yer blime that kid, mister," said the soldier, saluting the officer, and pointing to a boy of 18 fast asleep, who had been on duty over the prisoners; "I seen he wor reglar done up, and I sez, 'Look heer, youngster, you take a snooze, and I'll do sentry go for yer, never you mind. Honor bright, I shan't give yer away!' It's all right, mister; I hope as yer won't punish the poor little chap." Neither the kind-hearted soldier nor the "little chap" suffered over the unique incident of an English prisoner doing sentry duty over himself and companions out of a feeling of humanity for his Boer guard.

THE GERMAN CORPS

I have made reference to the German Corps in the chapter dealing with the battle of Elandslaagte. They were equally as unfortunate as their Holland and Scandinavian kinsmen in experiencing a bad cutting up in the early stages of the war. Colonel Schiel, the founder of the corps, was wounded and taken prisoner on the 20th of October, 1899, and ended his actual war experience in his first battle. His services to the Transvaal army have been greatly exaggerated. There were but two matters on which the Boers needed the aid of military experts in European methods of warfare; namely, artillery, and the construction of forts for Pretoria and Johannesburg. The burghers had placed all their reliance during previous wars in their rifles and mobility, and most of them were skeptical about the value of ordnance, except for siege operations,

after Jameson and his Raiders, with their ten guns, had been beaten and captured at Doornkop by half their number of burghers, armed only with Martini-Henry rifles. Still, an artillery corps was organized, as already related, and young burghers were drilled and instructed in gunnery practise. This was not the work of Colonel Schiel, as the British press have industriously attempted to make out. The Staats Artillery were organized and drilled by Majors Wolmarans and Erasmus, two burghers who had been sent to Europe by General Joubert to study and report upon the latest improvements in Continental gunnery; and to these two officers belongs the sole credit which English critics would prefer to assign to German or French anti-British service in the work of the Boer artillery.

ADJUTANT J. C. SANDBERG

General Louis Botha's Military Secretary during the Natal campaign

Colonel Schiel very probably rendered assistance in the planning and construction of the much-vaunted forts at Pretoria and the prison fort at Johannesburg; but, as these were not put to any use in the fighting which took place round the two cities in May, 1900, the benefit rendered to the Boer cause is not easily seen.

After the disaster of October 20 the German Brigade was reorganized and placed under the control of Commandant Krantz, of Pretoria, and members of the corps rendered excellent service on several occasions subsequently, notably in the fighting against Buller and Warren on the Upper Tugela, in January, 1900.

Associated with the corps in its second stage of active operations under Krantz were a number of young Europeans of some note, such as Baron Von Goldek, a Hungarian; Captain Max Schiffi and Lieutenant Simon, Austrians; Lieutenant Badicke, Baron Rotharch, and others. They were almost all looking for commissions, and, finding none, owing to the reasonable hesitancy of the Boers to entrust strangers who could not speak their language with posts of military responsibility, fought in the ranks in the Rand commandoes.

There were half-a-dozen German officers of experience and of some distinction indirectly associated with Krantz, who had also come out to the Transvaal in the hope of obtaining commands, and

these fought for a time in various corps and commandoes; some returning to Europe, disappointed at their failure, others fighting and dying during the campaign.

Baron Von Reitzenstein fought with General De la Rey in his brilliant operations against French around Colesberg. Colonel Von Braun and a small number of German volunteers, including Lieutenant Brausinitz, fought with Viljoen's brigade on the Tugela, and showed conspicuous bravery at Venter's Spruit, Spion Kop, and Vaal Krantz; the latter officer being killed, and Von Braun taken prisoner at one of these engagements.

Von Braun was an experienced cavalry officer, and his views on the British cavalry forces in the war were freely expressed on his release and return to Berlin in July, 1900. He spoke as follows in an interview:

"I am compelled to say that I never saw anything more miserable than the way the British used their cavalry. Never once have I seen outpost duty or reconnaissance properly carried out by English cavalry. The handling of several regiments combined showed not the faintest trace of the knowledge of the employment of a cavalry division.

"The Boers might well say that the English cavalry were mutes; that is, there are no generals capable of leading them. How useful cavalry would have been in all fights on the Upper Tugela by threatening the Boers' line of retreat, tho, of course, they would also have had to fight on foot."

A grandson of Marshal Von Wrangel was numbered among the numerous Barons and Counts who belonged to Villebois-Mareuil's foreign legion.

At Elandslaagte, Count Zeppelin, a very fine young fellow, fought with General Kock's body-guard, and was leader in one of the counter-charges upon the Gordon Highlanders, armed only with a whip, with which he struck the first man who mounted the ridge. He was found dead the following morning with ten bayonet wounds in his body. Another German who rendered very special service was Otto Von Loosberg, an American citizen. He had charge of one of Christian De Wet's guns at Sannas Post, and gave a very good account of himself and his piece at that sensational encounter.

Major Richard Albrecht, who was the head of the Free State Artillery, is probably the only German officer who can really claim a share of the lavish credit which English writers have freely bestowed on his country for work done by the Boers themselves. Albrecht, who was a native of Berlin, had served in an infantry regiment during the Franco-Prussian War, and was promoted for

his bravery during the siege of Paris. He subsequently went to the Orange Free State, took service under its Government, and organized the small artillery force of the little Republic, of which he was the recognized chief during the war. He was attached to the Wessels' commandoes in front of Kimberley, but had a roving commission to render assistance where it was most required. He had charge of Cronje's few guns at Modder River, Magersfontein, and Paardeberg, and earned the special thanks of his general and of President Steyn for the valuable work done by him on the occasion of the two earlier battles. Previous to the war he had been despatched to Germany to purchase a few guns of the newest character, and the six Krupps and two automatic pieces in possession of the Free State forces when war was declared had been purchased by Major Albrecht during this tour. He was a strict disciplinarian, but very popular with his corps. There were two subordinate officers of German nationality under Albrecht, whose names I have been unable to obtain. A Lieutenant Stuckenberg, who was killed at the battle of Enslin, was, I think, one of them. At no time during the war would the number of German volunteers exceed 500 men of the Federal forces. Albrecht surrendered with Cronje at Paardeberg.

THE ITALIAN CORPS

The Italian Corps numbered about 100, and were attached to the army of the Tugela under Lukas Meyer's command. With the exception of a few of the officers who arrived from Italy after the war had been some time in progress, the members had been miners in Johannesburg who volunteered to fight for the Republic. Most of them had served in the Italian army, and a few had taken part in the disastrous Abyssinian expedition. Their colonel was Camillo Ricchiardi, a very handsome, soldierly young fellow, and as brave as he was good-looking. He, too, had been in Abyssinia, and had likewise gone to the Philippines to offer his sword to Aguinaldo. Campaigning in the Far East was not very attractive, for climatic and other reasons, and he returned again to Europe after a very brief experience of Filipino warfare. He sailed for Lourenzo Marquez, and arrived in Pretoria shortly after hostilities began. Joined by Major Termini Merese and Lieutenant Count Pecci (a nephew of Pope Leo), an Italian Brigade was soon formed out of the men who had previously joined Viljoen's Rand commandoes.

Colonel Ricchiardi took part in all the battles along the Tugela, and enjoyed the confidence of General Botha. While the battle of Colenso was in progress he exposed himself to danger in a most

reckless manner, sitting on a sangar on the top of Fort Wylie during the fury of the English artillery attack, and smoking cigarettes in contemptuous disregard of the British gunners. "Always keep near the Boers in battle, if you do not want to be hit by the English artillerists," was the favorite advice of the young Italian to newcomers.

A true soldier's experience of war, with its risks and adventures, dangers and hardships, was rewarded in this instance in the fullest poetic manner with the guerdon of a romantic love and the happiness of a bride won on the field of battle. The handsome, dashing Camillo, tall and dark, quite a woman's ideal soldier-hero in appearance, was slightly wounded during the Tugela fighting, and went for a short time to hospital, where he met Mademoiselle Guttman, a relative, through her sister's marriage, of the Kruger family. Miss Guttman was a Red Cross nurse. The convalescent colonel contracted a very violent heart malady on meeting in such a capacity one of the belles of Pretoria. He saw the young lady again in that city, and then returned to Italy. Last November I had the pleasure of meeting him at Marseilles when President Kruger arrived in Europe. The Presidential party included Miss Guttman, and on the 5th of June, 1901, the beautiful nurse of Pretoria became the wife of Colonel Camillo Ricchiardi at Brussels.

A large number of Italians were employed in the Boer ammunition factory at Johannesburg, under the direction of M. Leon Grunberg, when the place was destroyed by dynamite in May, 1900. Their comrades in the city held a vendetta meeting, at which the cry of "Death to the English" in Johannesburg was raised, and would have been carried out by the infuriated Italians against the suspected authors of the dastardly crime had President Kruger not sent Camillo Ricchiardi to calm down the vengeful passion of his fellow-countrymen. In this he succeeded.

THE SCANDINAVIAN CORPS

The story of the Scandinavian Corps has already been told in the brief account I have given of the gallant part played by them in the battle of Magersfontein, where, in a fight between fifty of them and the Seaforth Highlanders, they were all but annihilated. The corps was organized before war broke out, and numbered about eighty men. These were Uitlanders, miners, and others employed on the Rand, and the cause of the Republic strongly appealed to their support in what appeared to them a war of aggression and of simple plunder on the part of the English.

The leader of the corps was Field Cornet Flygare, with a young Swede, Baron Helge Fagerskold, Captain Barendsen (an ex-Danish officer), and one Carl Albers Olssen as adjutants. The corps joined General Cronje's laager in the west, and took part in the early operations of the siege of Mafeking. Like other impatient Europeans, accustomed to other than Boer methods of warfare, the Norsemen were more eager for dashing actions and daring enterprises than the slow, psalm-singing burghers, and were importunate in their requests to be allowed to put an end to Baden-Powell's exasperating siege-show. The Boers listened, were politely grateful for such offers, and always refused, with a kind of fatherly feeling of pity for young men whom they looked upon as children in the knowledge of such fighting as successful methods of warfare in South Africa required.

When General Cronje was given the command of the Federal forces organized to meet Methuen, the Scandinavians were allowed to accompany him, and they fought in the battles of Modder River and Magersfontein. The fate which befell the brave but impetuous little band on the 11th of December excited the admiration of the burghers, but, like the similar recklessness of the Hollanders and Germans at Elandslaagte, it tended to confirm Boer officers in the conviction that while it was doubtless very magnificent it was also very unlike the rational system of warfare which should be waged by a small army, having no men to spare, against huge legions of mercenaries whose lives were valued at the price of their service.

There were about fifty or sixty more Scandinavians scattered among the Rand, Boxburg, Pretoria, and other commandoes, who preferred to serve under Boer officers, as in the case of numbers of Irish, American, German, and other nationalities included in the Uitlander population of Johannesburg.

RUSSIAN SCOUTS

A small number of Russians were among the Europeans who joined the Boer forces in October, 1899. They were not at first sufficiently numerous to form a distinctive corps, and were scattered among the Johannesburg commandoes. After the Natal campaign had virtually ended in the relief of Ladysmith, some thirty of the Russians who had taken part in the siege of that town formed themselves into a body of scouts and joined General Philip Botha's command. I was witness to some of their scouting work in the south of the Orange Free State while staying with Philip Botha at Ospruit Camp, and right useful work it was. On one occasion three

of them actually penetrated into the British lines near Bloemfontein and returned with a most accurate plan of Roberts' great encampment near the Free State capital. Philip Botha, who was himself an ideal chief of scouts, and Christian De Wet's right-hand man during his most successful enterprises in the Free State, held a very high opinion of his Russian pupils, and placed great confidence in their reports. They were all Cossacks from the Don River region of Russia.

Count Alexis de Ganetzky, a one-time gay young Russian in Paris, Prince Morgaff, and Colonel Eugene Maximoff were officers of Villebois-Mareuil's foreign legion, rather than actual chiefs of a Russian Corps. Maximoff was described by some of his Russian compatriots as an ex-police officer, and this statement, whether founded on fact or on fiction, tended to create a prejudice against him in the minds of the French *legionnaires*. Even if true it could still be consistent with a thorough loyalty to the Boer cause. He was an able military organizer, and was for a short time Villebois-Mareuil's chief lieutenant. He succeeded to the leadership of the legion after its chief had been killed at Boshof, but upon jealousies breaking out among the numerous would-be successors of the gallant French officer, Maximoff relinquished the command and fought in the ranks until he returned to Russia.

AMBULANCE HELP

The external help in Red Cross ambulance labor given to the Boer armies was considerable; almost all the Continental countries being represented in this humane work. Two completely equipped field hospitals, of 100 beds each, were contributed by French societies through the French Consul at Pretoria. A German Ambulance Corps, including doctors and nursing sisters, rendered valuable service, as did those of the Netherlands, Belgian, Italian, and Russian corps, under competent medical men, nurses, and administrators. Pretoria, Johannesburg, and other large Boer centers organized Red Cross Societies out of private and public donations; and, with the cooperation of the friends of the Republics in Europe, the Federal armies were thus fairly well equipped in the surgical, nursing, and general ambulance requirements of the campaign. The Burke Hospital of Pretoria was the gift of an Irish merchant of that city. He was neutral in the war as between Boer and Briton, and rendered generous help to the wounded on both sides through his well-equipped ambulance service. There were no scandals connected with the hospital management of the Boer field

forces, such as Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P., and others were compelled to expose in the case of the English hospitals, and British wounded have borne generous testimony to the humane manner in which their enemies treated them while under their care. No such disgraceful incident as that which occurred at Modder River can be laid at the door of the Republican generals. It remained for Mr. Chamberlain's military representatives to violate the Red Cross ensign by interfering with doctors engaged in attending to wounded burghers, treating them like common prisoners, and actually confiscating their equipments when compelled to acknowledge the wrong of the arrest.

Similar conduct on the part of the British in their treatment of Belgian, Dutch, and other pro-Boer ambulance organizations will have to be recorded in the full narrative of the war.

Chapter XXVII

SPION KOP

BULLER JOINED BY WARREN—THIRTY THOUSAND BRITISH AGAINST SIX THOUSAND BOERS—LYTTLETON CROSSES TUGELA AT POTGIETER'S—WARREN AT TRICHARDT'S—FIVE DAYS' FIGHTING WITHOUT ADVANCE OF BRITISH—DESCRIPTION OF SPION KOP—BRITISH SEIZE THE SUMMIT—PENNED IN BY BOERS—TERRIBLE EXECUTION BY BOER ARTILLERY—BOTHA'S ACCOUNT OF BATTLE—BRITISH RAISE WHITE FLAG—SURRENDER REPUDIATED BY COLONEL THORNEYCROFT, AND ADVANCING BOERS SHOT DOWN—BRITISH RETREAT UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS—DRIELING KOP SAVED TO BOERS BY UTRECHT MEN—WHY BOTHA DID NOT SHELL RETREATING BRITISH—BOER CASUALTIES—HORRORS OF THE BATTLE-FIELD—EXPLOIT OF THERON'S SCOUTS.

BULLER retired upon Chieveley and Frere after the battle of Colenso, and awaited the arrival of reenforcements before making another attempt to reach Ladysmith. He devoted a month to the task of preparing for his second effort to cross the Tugela, and, on being joined by General Warren and another division, this raising his army to a strength of 30,000 men and ten batteries of artillery, he was ready to try again. He found himself at the head of the largest and best equipped army which the British Empire had put in the field in this generation, and from the boastful tone of his address to this fine force on the eve of its second advance, he felt confident that he could fight his way this time past the burghers who had driven him back from the river on the 15th of December.

During this interval Botha had watched and waited at Colenso, ready for the next move of his adversary. His force had varied in strength according to the situation around Ladysmith. Men were constantly riding from one position to the other, and regular heliographic communication was kept up between Joubert and his young lieutenant while holding two English armies at bay. When, as on the occasion of the assault on the Platrand on the 6th of January, the entire Vryheid commando left the Tugela to cooperate in the attack, Buller had no more than 4,000 men in front of his 30,000. The British general was only ten miles south of the river, while a third of his opponents had gone fifteen miles north to attack the garrison which the Commander-in-Chief of Natal was to rescue from its investment. No thought of or attempt at a dash forward, however, suggested itself to the general who was to have eaten his

Christmas plum-pudding in Pretoria. So the Vryheiders returned after their unsuccessful mission, and continued to wait for the development of their enemy's further plans.

Botha's and Meyer's commandoes had been augmented by some 1,000 more burghers since Colenso. It was with a force of about 6,000 men that they had to guard the extended lines of the Tugela River and their forty miles of frontage southward. True, these 6,000 men were the finest horsemen in the world, and the best rifle shots. They could concentrate, owing to their magnificent mobility, upon any threatened point in one-fourth the time of their enemies, and they were able to fire, if necessary, 60,000 shots each minute, thanks to the best rifle which modern improvements have produced. Still, it was a very inadequate body of men with which to defend the vulnerable river. Villebois-Mareuil, who was with Botha all this time, and who had examined the whole line, declared that the positions from Langwani Hill, east of Colenso, to Honger's Poort, west of Spion Kop, would require 50,000 men to hold them securely, and of these Botha had only the number given above at his disposal.

By the 14th of January General Buller, with at least 25,000 men and 50 guns, advanced to the two drifts fifteen or twenty miles west of Colenso. His army was divided into two unequal divisions; the lesser one apparently intending to cross the river at Potgieter's Drift, and the other at the second drift, still further west. This second division was the stronger in men and guns, and it was soon apparent that it was this force, which was under the command of General Warren, that would give most trouble to the vigilant commandoes looking down from the hills upon the two columns seeking a common road to Ladysmith.

Under the protection of Buller's guns on Mount Alice, General Lyttleton crossed the river at Potgieter's and occupied some low hills on the north bank without opposition. On the following day General Warren threw a pontoon bridge over the Tugela at Trichardt's, and succeeded, tho not without some opposition, in carrying his men and guns over. The Boers in front retired, firing. Both divisions attempted to advance from their respective locations, but found the ground stubbornly contested by an unknown force, which seemed to be ubiquitous, and to be found ready and seemingly entrenched at whatever point the British attacked it.

On the 18th and 19th Warren attempted to work his way by a détour northeast from the river, so as to turn the Boer extreme right at Acton Homes. Botha countered this movement by threatening Warren's communications with the river and Springfield, and the Englishman turned back with his tenacious adversary hanging like a bulldog on his left flank. On the 20th Botha found his lines

on Tabanamyana Hill and on the adjoining kopjes attacked by Warren's whole artillery and by an infantry advance before which he slowly retired back to higher and stronger positions, prepared for such an eventuality. Here the two forces remained, and fought what was chiefly an artillery combat during the 21st and 22nd. On the evening of the latter day, after another similar encounter, the Boers moved east again, slowly, doggedly, to the very positions they had occupied round Spion Kop when Warren had crossed the river on the 17th. It had been a five days' continuous fight, and the enemy found himself at the end of it just where he had started, and not a yard nearer to Ladysmith.

The two divisions of Buller's army were now so located that the Boer main force was midway, between but north of, their positions. Botha's pickets and brandwacht's were extended east and west along the hills from Brakfontein to Tabanamyana. His center was behind Spion Kop, and was entrenched there, with this hill standing between him and Buller's guns across the river.

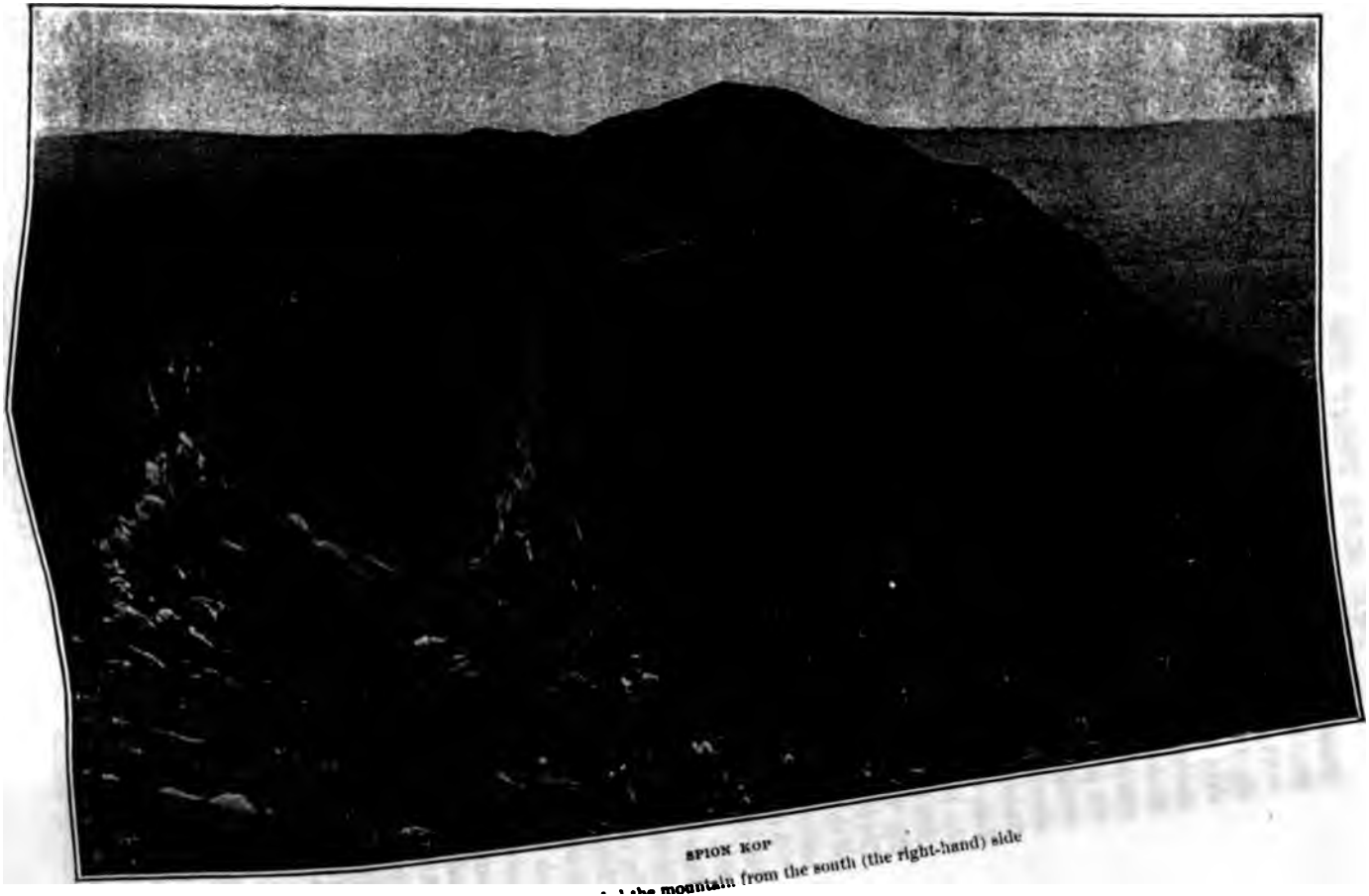
Botha's real strength lay in the complete concealment of his guns, and in the mystery which he most skilfully succeeded in throwing round the real location and number of men under his command. As at Colenso, he made Buller fight an unknown quantity, and, whether they really believed it or not, his adversaries declared they had almost as many men in front of them as they themselves commanded. This was how matters stood under the shadow of Spion Kop when Briton and Boer had ended the sixth day's running battle, and lay down to try and snatch a dubious rest near the spot where the fight had first begun.

Botha was unwilling to occupy the summit of Spion Kop with any large force, owing to its being dominated by the naval guns on Mount Alice from the south, which was in possession of the enemy. He held lower hills behind, to the east and west of Spion Kop; wisely leaving himself and guns free to move backward to the mountains west and south of Ladysmith, if compelled still to give way before the enemy's superior forces.

Spion Kop slopes up from the banks of the Tugela to a height of about 2,000 feet, the reverse, or north, side not being so steep as that facing the river. There is a deep indentation in the south side of the mountain, extending through the whole of its upper half, while all the approaches on the north side to the top of the hill are over a rough ridge without any cover of any kind. The crown of the hill is quite bare and of a stony character, having an area of some five or six acres, with boulders strewn about. There is a slope from the southwest to the northwest side of the summit with a "hump" on the crest of the eastern extremity.

A brandwacht of sixteen men of the Vryheid commando were on the mountain on the night of the 23rd of January. They were the remnant of a larger force which had held the hilltop previous to Warren's advance westward after crossing the river, when every available burgher had to be sent to strengthen Botha's right wing. The brandwacht remained for observation purposes only, and were surprised in the early hours of the morning of Wednesday, the 24th. The enemy had advanced silently up the hill, under cover of a night of inky darkness, and easily rushed the sangars behind which the few burghers had kept guard. Two of the picket were bayoneted after fire had been opened on the British, and the others succeeded in making their way down the northeastern slope of the hill to General Burger's laager. The alarm had already spread through the Boer lines, as it was divined from the firing on the summit of the kop that the enemy had succeeded in seizing it. General Burger acted with prompt decision. He ordered ninety men of the Carolina burghers, under Commandant Prinsloo (of Carolina), to scale the hill up the way the brandwacht had come down, and obtain a lodgment on the northeast side of the open space on the top before the light should enable the enemy the easier to occupy the whole of the hill. At the same time fifty Heidelbergers were despatched to a kopje farther west of the hill from whence they could reach the flank of the English across an intervening valley with rifle fire. A kindly-disposed fog which fell over the scene in the early morning enabled these orders to be carried out without a hitch, and so close were the opposing forces to each other when the sun rolled up the curtain of mist from the crown of Spion Kop for the war tragedy to commence that the Carolina men sprang at the nearest British troops and actually wrested the rifles from them before they had recovered from the surprise which the unexpected presence of the Boers created. The English were driven back at once from that point of the crest thus taken by the burghers, and the fight for the possession of the plateau began. The crest line thus seized gave shelter to the Carolina men in shooting back the enemy, and enabled them to extend right and left, so as to open as wide a circle of fire upon their foes as the position would allow.

The enemy were in possession of the sangars which had been built by the Boers who had previously held the hill, and their solid character can be seen from the picture, taken during the fight, which represents the English in the act of firing across the open space at the Carolina burghers. These latter, however, were the cooler combatants, and the better shots, and the duel with rifles which began early that morning soon avenged the bayoneted sentinels of the midnight surprise. It was to be a fight to a finish



SPION KOP

the mountain from the south (the right-hand) side

where pure grit and pluck must determine whether Boer or Briton should hold the hill.

The English on the plateau numbered eight companies of Lancashire Fusiliers, six companies of the Royal Lancaster Regiment, with some 200 more men, including sappers. As against these 900, the ninety Carolina burghers held their crest of the hill. General Botha directed the battle from the slope of a ridge rising northward behind Spion Kop, from whence he could clearly see with his glasses how the fight on the summit was proceeding. He soon recognized that the men sent up by Schalk Burger were greatly outnumbered, and he ordered up some 400 more to the support of the Carolina burghers. These were volunteers from various commandoes who climbed the hill in separate bodies. There were thirty of the Pretoria Village commando, under Field Cornet Zeederberg; also men from the Pretoria District commando, Viljoen's Rand Brigade, the German Corps, and a Krugersdorp contingent under Field Cornet Kemp. General Smuts, of Ermelo, was senior in command of the united burgher force who volunteered to help the men on the summit of the kop to keep it.

After Botha had thus strengthened the Carolina men by as many burghers as the space in possession of the Boers would offer reasonable room and cover for, he disposed of his seven guns so that they should cooperate with the men engaged in the deadly combat on the kop, and prevent as far as possible the moving of any of the enemy's guns on to the mountain. He saw the stupid blunder which Warren had committed in sending so large a force of men up to a position where there was not space for more than 500 on each side to fight in, and he prepared to take advantage of the crowding of the unfortunate Tommies on the portion of the plateau where the steady fire of the burghers was keeping them penned in as effectively as a barbed wire fence encloses a flock of sheep.

Almost every English report of this battle leads the reader to believe that the Boers had one or more pom-poms on the hilltop during the fight. There was no gun of any kind there. The Boer artillery were placed as follows: To the extreme right of Botha's position, some 5,000 yards away, on the west end of the plateau of which Spion Kop was part, there was a fifteen-pound Creusot; still nearer, but on a lower elevation, there was a Krupp of the same caliber; still yet to the west on a round kopje, about 2,000 yards from Spion Kop, a pom-pom was placed; the kopje being very exposed to the British fire and being held by 50 Heidelbergers. Midway between this hill and Spion Kop there was another fourteen-pound Krupp for a couple of hours in the morning, but it was removed by Botha's orders and put on the ridge behind Spion Kop;

the second pom-pom was located on the side of a small hill eastward about 2,000 yards from the top of the big kop, while still eastward of this a "smoke-powder" Krupp was worked from the Free Staters' position on Drieling Hill. It was the Krupp back of Spion Kop, and the two pom-poms to the right and left of the hill, which helped the Mausers on the plateau to do the terrible execution among the Lancashire men during the battle. Neither of these guns, however, was nearer than 2,000 yards to the summit where the fight raged, while the three pieces were fired up from a level of, at least, 500 feet lower than the scene of the encounter. The other four guns were employed in guarding the approaches on the east and west sides of Spion Kop, up which the English would have to send their reenforcements from their main lines below on the Tugela.

Major Wolmarans, with Lieutenants Von Wichmann and Groothuizen were in charge of Botha's seven pieces, and no guns were ever better served or ever fought a more unequal or more brilliantly successful artillery combat. Opposed to them on the other side of the plateau down by the river, on the high hills beyond the Tugela, on every available position between Warren's and Lyttleton's co-operating forces, were no less than fifty field pieces, including two 4.7 guns, and a battery of twelve-pound navals. The scene of the sanguinary fight on the mountain was lower than the position occupied by the two huge 4.7 guns, which were thus able to rake the summit of Spion Kop from beyond the river.

In giving me an account of this battle from which this narrative is largely drawn, General Botha said, in dealing with the artillery employed on both sides:

"Our salvation in the fighting on and around Spion Kop was the astounding inefficiency of Buller's artillery. Our few guns, on the contrary, were splendidly served. The positions were most unfavorable to us, after the enemy had taken the Kop. We had left it in possession of only a few men, owing to the dominating location in which some of Buller's batteries were placed. They could fire down on the hill, whereas we had to fire up from where our guns were placed, in lower positions on the side of the ridge. I had an officer on the side of the Kop who heliographed the exact situation of the enemy on the hill, and where each shell struck. Not a single one of our shots fell among our own men. Our Krupp and pom-poms told with terrible effect upon the unfortunate massed Tommies on the narrow ledge of the hill. The English guns, on the contrary, were responsible for a large number of the casualties on their side; shell after shell missing the mark and falling among the men who were fighting bravely against us; some of whom at one part of the fight actually ran

across to our positions to save themselves from the badly-directed fire from their own guns!"

Meanwhile the combat on the mountain top continued fast and furious as the morning advanced. The arrival of the reenforcements from the burgher lines below gave the immediate advantage to the less numerous but more careful, cautious, and more deadly marksmen behind the ring of 500 Mausers on the Boer end of the plateau. Boers naturally extend their lines when firing. They need no orders to do what common sense dictates. The burghers slowly spread themselves to the right and left, moving on their bodies without rising to their feet, and building some kind of cover for their heads as they gradually worked their way round so as to be able to cross-fire their foes. At one point, to the left of the Boer position, those who remained of the Carolina men managed to creep round in this way until they got almost in line with the right of their opponents' sangars, where they were enabled to enfilade their enemies. The men on the British right were thus made to suffer far more severely than those at the other extremity. Almost all their officers had been shot before noon, whereupon a white flag was raised from behind a sangar. The act was not seen lower down the Boer entrenchments, and the fire continued. Again the white flag was raised, whereupon Jan Celliers, of Pretoria, cried out, "Hands up! Come out." The Tommies, who belonged to the Lancashire Fusiliers, stood up in their trench with reversed arms, and Celliers ran across to their lines, followed by some fifty of his men. Firing had now ceased on both sides at the British right, and about 150 of the Fusiliers had moved over to the Boer end of the battle-field in the act of surrender, when a British officer from the English left position arrived with reenforcements which had been sent up from below. He advanced to Celliers, declaring he would not recognize the act of surrender, and shouting, "I am the officer in command; back to your positions, men; the fight must go on." The officer turned out to be Colonel Thorneycroft, who had led the advanced section of Woodgate's men up the hill in the morning. He assumed the command of the British which General Woodgate's mortal wound had left vacant on the field. All this action on the part of Thorneycroft, who had only just reached that part of the field, may have been in accordance with the rules of war, so far as his own personal proceedings were concerned; but it is an undeniable fact that 200 or 300 of the men whom Woodgate had commanded until struck down had several times asked to surrender by exhibiting the white flag, and had at last, to the number of 150, actually handed over their arms. Thorneycroft learned

all this from Celliers, and yet he not only ordered the fight to continue, but saw without protest the men whom he had brought with him jump behind the trenches and open fire upon Celliers and his men before these could get back to the protection of their own lines. The Boers who had remained in their positions could not return the fire at once, as their own comrades and some of the surrendered English were in front; several of both being shot down by Thorneycroft's men. These are the true facts of the white flag incident on Spion Kop, as related by Mr. Celliers and others who witnessed the whole proceedings, and yet it was all but univer-

THE NORTHEAST SIDE OF SPION KOP, UP WHICH THE BOERS CHARGED. A GROUP OF HEROES OF THE FIGHT

sally reported in the English press, in the war correspondents' narrative of the fight, that it was the Boers who had "treacherously misused the white flag" on the summit of the hill in order to enable them to fire under its cover into the British trenches. The charge was consistent with the customary rule of bluffing resorted to by the English, when an ugly incident on their side could neither be truthfully defended nor explained. As a matter of fact, it was during the cessation of firing at the right of the British position, caused by the hoisting of the white flag on the part of 150 of the enemy's men, that Thorneycroft arrived with reenforcements, and that Celliers and his men were fired upon by the new arrivals.

Back to their positions went the Boers, and the fight of the morning recommenced, with, if possible, a deadlier spirit on the part of the burghers to drive their foes off the mountain. It was resolved that no more attention would be given to British white

flags or emblems of surrender. One hundred more men were heliographed for to Botha. and these came gallantly up the hill, and joined the indomitable band on the north and east crest in the deadly combat for the possession of the plateau. Coats were off each burgher. shirt-sleeves were rolled up. and the steady, deadly work of the Mauser fire continued to thin the ranks behind the opposite lines. Thorneycroft's reenforcements made a poor fight of it, compared with the pluck with which the Lancashire men had withstood the terribly galling fusillade and the shelling by the Boer pom-poms during the morning. The mass of Tommies who had been brought up to replace the men who had been disabled were badly handled by their officers. They were thrust in upon the men who had sustained the Boer attack all the day, and thus offered their foes, in the closer formation caused by their crowding, human targets which only the worst of shooting could miss. The burghers did not miss, and the victims of British blundering continued to fall in greater numbers as the hours sped on.

Here there could be no possible pretense that the English were held back by "formidable entrenchments" or by "Boers behind rocks." The British had the best protection on the hilltop, and the choice of positions, having captured the summit from the Vryheid brandwacht in the early hours of the morning. The Boers had no gun on the hill, and were never more in numbers than one to six of their foes from the commencement of the fight to the finish. Only an average distance of some 200 yards separated the two lines; the space narrowing at one point to seventy yards. The British had bayonets, as the English accounts of the march of the reenforcing troops up the mountain-side spoke of steel "flashing in the sun," as the khaki-clad regiments made their way to the scene of battle up above. Colonel Thorneycroft, therefore, had every inducement which an officer could desire to charge across that small open space, and overwhelm his opponents with the mere overpowering strength of numbers. He did not do so. The Boers in shirt-sleeves across the way barred the road, with a dauntless pluck which has never been excelled, if it ever was equaled, on any battle-field. Their victory was complete in every feature and detail of the fiercest fight of the war, when the 2,000 or 3,000 British troops on the hill, by the orders of Thorneycroft, seized the cover of darkness under which to retreat. Botha's 600 burghers thus remained victors on the summit of the historic kop after a fight of fourteen hours' duration.

While the encounter on the hilltop was proceeding several minor engagements took place to the right and left of the mountain where it sloped down to lower ground, and then descended south-

ward to the river. The main stream of British reenforcements came up on the western side, and had to run the gauntlet of the Heidelberg riflemen to their left; these, with Viljoen's men and the Pretoria commandoes, bearing the brunt of the fighting at this point. Warren's artillery from the hills below, especially his howitzer battery, covered the march of these British reenforcements, but not sufficiently to shield them completely from the fire of their foemen in front and flank. Over 100 of the enemy were killed and wounded on this side of Spion Kop. Every attempt made to advance up the ridge from whence the Boer guns pelted their piti-

BRITISH FIRING ON BOERS AT SPION KOP

less shells on to the top of Spion Kop was beaten back by Botha's men, with superb ease and effect.

On Drieling Kop, east of Spion Kop, the Carolina commando, ninety of whose men were up above, were almost overwhelmed about four in the afternoon by a large force which had advanced up that way to turn the position of the men on the summit. General Botha was at his wits' end for men when a panting rider from Schalk Burger reached him with an urgent message for help. He instantly ordered all his adjutants to go and keep back the enemy until he could detach the Utrecht burghers from their position behind him, and send them to Drieling Kop. He was left absolutely alone until his secretary, Sandberg, rode back with the tidings that the splendid rush of the Utrechters across to the aid of the Carolina men disconcerted the advancing Tommies, who descended the hill and fell back upon their main body below.

Colonel Thorneycroft has been blamed by Lord Roberts and the critics for having retired from Spion Kop after the battle of the 24th; the contention being that the Boers would have given way if the fight had been renewed on the following morning. The true facts do not sustain this view. Those troops who had fought most bravely on the hilltop without food or water during the whole day, and without sleep the previous night, were physically unable to continue the combat, and they retired down the hill, without orders, when darkness had put a stop to the battle. It was under these circumstances that the order to retreat was given. Thorneycroft had no other alternative. It was the generals who did not visit the scene of the battle upon the mountain that blundered in not sending up fresh troops and half-a-dozen Maxim guns under cover of darkness to replace the demoralized Tommies during the night of the 24th. That would have ended the contest for the possession of the hill early on the morning of the 25th, but the victors in such a problematical triumph would have had to run the gantlet of Botha's guns for the barren glory of holding Spion Kop. In either case the English death-roll would have told a tale of relatively proportionate slaughter.

A dramatic story has been related in connection with Warren's retreat across the Tugela on the 25th and 26th without molestation from Botha's guns. It has been alleged that Botha was urged to let his artillery play upon the retreating enemy, especially when they were repassing the river on a pontoon bridge, but that the Boer general had replied, he was restrained from any such action by heliographic instructions from Joubert "not to fire upon a fleeing foe." This story is without any foundation except the circumstance on which it was built. No such instructions had been received, or would have been acted upon if received, had the actual situation encouraged such action on Botha's part. It did not, and for two very substantial reasons. His small force had fought every day, and had worked at trench building every night, from the 17th to the 24th, almost without cessation, and with very little food. They were utterly exhausted after so prolonged a struggle, and it was simply impossible to order men so worn out to forego sleep and rest on the eighth night in order to attack an enemy so enormously stronger in numbers, even on retreat. At nine on the evening of the 24th, while the firing still continued, an officer wishing to see General Botha was told he was in the tent of Major Wolmarans, writing his report of the day's battle for President Kruger. On entering the tent, the general, his secretary, and Wolmarans were found with a half-written report before them, and with heads *leaning* on the table, in sheer exhaustion, overcome with sleep.

A BOER COMMANDO BELOW SPION KOP AFTER THE BATTLE

Botha's main reason for not attacking Warren's retreating columns was the fewness of his men and guns. He would have had to reveal his real weakness when once he took the aggressive, and removed from the positions which best enabled him to mask his forces and to maintain the delusion—which was a formidable moral factor in favor of the Federal forces—that the Boers were twice or three times as strong in burghers and in artillery as they were in reality. The Boer generals were compelled to maintain this tactical deception as part of their military operations; for if Buller at Colenso, Methuen at Magersfontein, and Warren at Spion Kop, had known or believed there were no more than 5,000 foemen and half-a-dozen guns in front of armies of three or four times that strength in men and artillery, the results of these battles might have been less disastrous to British military prestige, if no less worthy of Boer generalship and bravery. The origin of the story of Joubert's interdiction was the occurrence related in connection with the battle of Modderspruit, when the Commandant-General did forbid a pursuit of a retreating force, and under circumstances which, unlike those at Spion Kop, warranted and called for the delivery of a smashing blow at a beaten foeman. Had Botha possessed the relatively equal force which was under Joubert's command on the 30th of October, when Warren fell back from Spion Kop on the 25th of January, no possible orders would have restrained him from hurling his opponent's columns into the Tugela. He had beaten 3,000 of Warren's men on Spion Kop into pulp. He could not, with 5,000 or 6,000 burghers, who had been fighting for eight days continuously, engage 20,000 men and 50 guns in an aggressive action the day following without inviting both defeat and disaster.

General Botha declared the Federal loss in the battle of Spion Kop to be 50 killed and 120 wounded. Of these casualties the brave ninety Carolina men who retook the hill in the fog numbered no less than fifty, or over sixty per cent. of the valiant little band. These ninety held the hilltop against all the men brought up by General Woodgate in the early hours of that memorable morning until they were reenforced by the volunteers from the several commandoes and corps down below; one man against ten, and the ten holding the stronger shelter. But the Carolina men knew how to shoot. They were the heroes of Spion Kop, tho the Pretoria, Krugersdorp, Heidelberg, Rand men, and the Germans were alike conspicuous for their bravery.

The total British losses in killed, wounded, and prisoners were fully 1,500, nearly 400 being killed. At no time during the battle on the mountain top did the Boers number fully 600 men. Every

Boer, therefore, accounted for over two of his enemies, in probably the best fight ever made by white men.

The names of the dead heroes of the two Carolina wards, or companies, who fought so magnificently on Spion Kop were:

Ward 1.—Broeder W. Prinsloo, Theunis Breytenbach, Barend de Koker, C. Potgieter, L., son, Jacob Malan.

The following were wounded: A. de Lange, A. M'Callum, jun.; E. Haenert, N. Harries, Paul Meyer (severely), Frans van Heerden, Johannes Pretorius, J. H. Kilian, Cornelius Breytenbach, C. du

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men lay dead and wounded within the confined area of the mountain top. They were almost all on the side of the hill which had been occupied by the English, and where the Krupp and pom-pom shells had burst with their rain of missiles. Heads were found a dozen yards from their ghastly trunks; hands and legs were scattered over the rocky surface; torn and mangled bodies were lying in all directions, with scores of dead faces upturned with staring eyes in the sun as if upbraiding high Heaven for permitting such murderous work among men belonging to God-fearing nations. A gruesome, sickening, hideous picture, which the brush of a Verestchagin, with all its powers of realistic portraiture, could not match in painted horrors from the limitless domain of artistic creations. "I wished," said General Tobias Smuts, in giving me his impressions of the awful scene which met his view after the battle had ended, "that I had had the power of transporting a dozen of these poor, brave, mangled fellows lying there with headless bodies and shattered limbs, to a certain bedroom in Birmingham or in Government House, Cape Town, so that the two chief authors of this unnatural war should see some of the results of their policy on waking from sleep in their safe and luxurious homes. It might induce them to bring this dreadful conflict to a close."

General Botha, in further reference to this battle, told me:

"Again, there was an unaccountable delay in the burying of the English dead, as at Colenso. Several hundred men lay unburied at the top of the hill, in very hot weather, too, for three or four days. I had granted an armistice of twenty-four hours to General Warren for the purpose of attending to the wounded and of burying the dead, but it looked by the delay which occurred as if he were more anxious to march his big force back across the Tugela than to attend to the duties for which the armistice had been agreed to by me. I sent in a request twice for any wounded of mine who might have fallen into the enemy's hands, offering to deliver over all his wounded who were with us, without obtaining any response. At last he sent me four men, and I returned him 300."

The delay in burying the British dead on Spion Kop induced the Kaffirs of the locality to loot the battle-field, carrying off belts, boots, and other articles belonging to the slain. A number of these natives were seen marching about with helmets on their heads mimicking the fallen British soldiers. A witty Boer officer named them "The South African Native Lancers," out of contempt for the pig-sticking heroes of Elandslaagte.

A scouting corps composed of young men, bank clerks, shop assistants, and artisans, chiefly from the Rand and Krugersdorp,

rendered invaluable assistance to General Botha during the whole Tugela campaign. Their captain, Daanie Theron, was a young Afrikander, of Krugersdorp. They dogged every movement of the enemy's forces, now at Brakfontein, next day west at Acton Homes, next across the river, prowling round Warren's camp-fires at night,

AFTER THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP

How the British buried their dead

in the most daredevil manner; always reporting some valuable intelligence to the general about impending movements against some point in the chain of Boer positions along the Tabana mountains. On the 20th of January three of them—Roos, Slechtkimp, and Hinton—diverted the fire of five batteries of Warren's artillery from a spot where Major Wolmarans was erecting a protec-

tion for a pom-pom, on to the top of a high spur overlooking the Tugela, by climbing this hill, which Botha had evacuated the day before, and unfurling the Transvaal flag on the summit. The three remained on the hill, with a dozen guns playing upon it, until they were satisfied that their tactics had achieved their object, when they succeeded in regaining the Boer lines.

Theron was boyish in appearance, of slight build, with a frank, even merry, expression on his face which invited confidence. This facial evidence of a gentle and jovial disposition was, however, an admirable mask for as daring and as resourceful a spirit as any chief of scouts ever possessed. His ability to disguise himself was due largely to his clean-shaven, youthful looks, and powers of mimicry. He spoke English without a trace of Afrikander accent, and to this fact was largely due his many successes in obtaining information from within the enemy's lines; one story of his prowess alleging that he penetrated into Ladysmith the night before the Boer attack on the Platrand.

The country along the Tugela was an ideal one for the work of scouting, deep valleys running in between steep-sided hills, with dongas on the slopes of mountains from which every motion of the enemy on both banks of the river could be seen without attracting attention. Innumerable nooks and corners, sheltered by trees or clumps of mimosa, or huge rocks, enabled these young scouts to stalk the clumsy movements of the British, blundering and floundering in labyrinthian mazes, in and out of the paths and spoors which led upward from the winding Tugela to the frowning ramparts of the barrier ridges which shut the way to Ladysmith. It was an ideal country also for Boer fighting, and no general ever made better use of his men and of Nature's cooperation in offering positions in defense of a just cause than did Louis Botha in that wonderful six days' running fight which ended so gloriously in the victory of Spion Kop.

A story is told of an old burgher, aged seventy, who was among the first to volunteer in the reenforcement sent up the mountain by the Boer general. He was accompanied by his grandson, a boy of fourteen. No other Mauser on Spion Kop dealt out a more steady and effective fire during the carnage of the 24th than that of Oom Piet. "One more Rooinek down, grandpapa," would be exultingly shouted by the boy as his keener eyes noted the gaps made behind the sangars across the open space, and so the scene continued. Finally Oom Piet's bandolier was emptied of its cartridges, and no other supply was near at hand. The lad, however, was equal to the occasion. Outside the entrenchments lay a burgher who had been shot through the head early in the day, and

before the boy could be prevented he vaulted over the boulders, possessed himself of the dead burgher's bandolier, and sprang back again to the side of the old warrior with the ammunition. On the dead being counted the following day the old man and his grandson were found among the slain, lying side by side.

Another record of conspicuous bravery will live in the recollection of the burghers who helped to gain and who may survive the victory of Spion Kop. This was the death of old Nicholas Mentz, a Field Cornet of the Heilbron burghers, forming part of the Free State contingent with Botha's force. On the 18th a patrol of 200 men were sent across the river above Spion Kop to find out the main positions of the English west of Mount Alice. A few of the patrol were riding ahead of the body, and were told by a Kaffir that there were no British in front, where a kopje obscured the view in advance. Mentz and some fifty men rode ahead, and found themselves under a hill held by a large force of the enemy. They resolved, unwisely, to storm the hill, but were shot back by the troops who had been concealed behind, and who were in overwhelming numbers. The burghers retired, but old Mentz, his son Nicholas, and another would not turn from any number of Rooineks, so they put their backs to a rock and faced the entire force in front of them, firing point blank at their foes. Young Mentz fell wounded; so did his companion, Theron. Old Nicholas was shot in both legs, but he still fired, refusing to surrender. A British officer, in admiration of the old man's pluck, called upon him three times to stop firing, and prevented his men from killing their valiant foe. He refused to stop, and was killed in the act of firing his last bullet.

Chapter XXVIII

CAMPAIGN AROUND COLESBERG

GENERAL SCHOEMAN'S COMMANDO OCCUPIES COLESBERG—DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT—INACTIVITY OF SCHOEMAN—TACTICS OF GENERAL FRENCH, HIS OPPONENT—PIET DE WET ASSUMES BOER COMMAND—FIVE DAYS' FIGHTING FOR POSITION—BOERS RETIRE TO COLESBERG DEFENSES—DEFEAT OF THE SUFFOLKS—DE LA REY ASSUMES BOER COMMAND—DEFEATS BRITISH REAR-GUARD AT RENSBURG SIDING—DRAWN BATTLE AT SLINGUSFONTEIN—BRITISH FORCED SOUTH TO NAAUWPOORT JUNCTION—DE LA REY GOES NORTH WITH RAND POLICE TO JOIN CRONJE—EXPLOIT OF DAN VILJOEN.

WE will leave the scene of operations on the Tugela for a brief space in order to deal with the campaign in the Colesberg District of Cape Colony.

I have summarized the course of events south of the Orange River in the early part of a previous chapter, and told how the occupation of the Colesberg, Burghersdorp, and Aliwal districts by Free State forces under Generals Grobler, Ollivier, and Schoeman led to the attempt on the part of General Gatacre to surprise Ollivier and his men at Stormberg Junction, on the 10th of December. The results of this disastrous adventure to the British have been related in the same chapter.

Following the Boer victory at Stormberg, the English general retired dispirited to the camp at Putterskraal, and the fighting between the British and Boer forces in the north of Cape Colony was transferred to the Colesberg district, some eighty miles northwest of Stormberg, and about thirty south of the Orange River.

General Schoeman, a wealthy Transvaaler of some military experience, was elected Commandant of the Transvaal and Free State Burghers and Cape Colony Volunteers who formed the mixed commando which took possession of Colesberg, in November, 1899.

This body numbered some 2,000 men. The Volunteers from the surrounding country, who knew the entire district and had reliance upon the sympathies of the Dutch population, urged an immediate march southward with the object of seizing the railway junction at Naauwpoort, which was held at the time by a weak British garrison.

Schoeman would not sanction any such forward movement, tho the distance was no more than fifty miles along the railroad. He made Colesberg his headquarters, and there he insisted on remaining for fully a month, during which time British troops were despatched from Cape Town to strengthen Naauwpoort, while to General French was entrusted the task of holding the railway and the country south of where Schoeman was engaged in his rôle of masterly inactivity.

The arrival of French with reenforcements at this important junction, compelled the Federal governments to pay attention to the complaints urged by the burghers against General Schoeman's tactics, and Commandant Piet De Wet was appointed fighting general to the forces in the locality.

In addition to this change, 200 of the Johannesburg Police were added to the Colesberg garrison. Subsequently additions were also made from General Grobler's command, and when the English forces were increased later still in men and guns to close upon 12,000 troops and four or five batteries of artillery, General De la Rey was detached from the Magersfontein army early in January, to assume command of the Federals, and bar French's way in any attempt to carry the enemy's force across the Orange River at Norvals Pont, on the direct road to Bloemfontein.

Colesberg is a picturesque village with about 1,500 inhabitants, lying in a valley surrounded by bare hills. It was noted in the last generation as a rendezvous for hunters and for diamond dealers.

It is claimed to the credit of the little town that the man who found the first diamond at New Bush (Kimberley) was John O'Reilly, a citizen of Colesberg.

The railway from Port Elizabeth to the Free State border passes near to Colesberg, on to Norvals Pont, where it crosses the Orange River. South of Colesberg, the villages of Rensburg, Arundel, and Teesdale, each with a railway station, intervened between Schoeman's headquarters and the junction at Naauwpoort which was General French's base for his operations against the Boer commandoes at Colesberg.

The plan of the British in their marches and countermarches through the Colesberg district, from November until February, when French was transferred to Modder River to carry out Lord Roberts' plan for a cavalry dash on Kimberley, was to keep engaged as large a number of burghers as possible, with the object of preventing their cooperation with Botha on the Tugela or with Cronje at Magersfontein, and of stopping their further movement southward into Cape Colony.

Fully 5,000 Boers were thus engaged during December and Jan-

uary. This number represented nearly one-sixth of the entire Federal forces in the field, and the work of the 12,000 troops who forced these commandoes to defend the British districts which they had invaded, was worth more to the general plan of operations against the Federals than the defeats to which French and Clements were repeatedly subjected at the hands of De la Rey and Piet De Wet.

French's troops included Scots Greys, Inniskillings, Hussars, Household Cavalry, several mounted Colonial regiments, Yorkshires, Suffolks, Berkshires, Wiltshires, Royal Irish, Worcesters, Dragoon Guards, and other forces, together with four batteries of field and horse artillery.

The forces on both sides assumed their maximum strength in January; there having been no more than half the numbers given above present in the field up to Christmas. General French was in supreme command of the British, until he left for the Modder River early in February, 1900.

Schoeman commanded the Boers until about the middle of December, when Commandant Piet De Wet assumed the control, aided by Generals Grobler and Lemmer, and Commandant Fouche. On January 7, General De la Rey was delegated to take over the supreme command, and he left the Magersfontein lines for that purpose. He remained in chief control until French was transferred to another command, and until General Clements was compelled to retreat with this fourth British army back to Arundel.

No important engagement occurred around Colesberg before the 1st of January, 1900. Skirmishes, affairs with outposts, and scouting operations occupied the energies of both armies during the six weeks which elapsed from the seizure of Colesberg by the Boers, until a six days' contest began between French and Schoeman, and Piet De Wet on December 31, which resulted in the retirement of the advanced burgher outposts from Rensburg to Colesberg. During this running fight, the object of the English was, to get round the right flank of the extended Boer line, southwest of Colesberg, turn Schoeman's flank, and occupy the hills immediately surrounding the town, from which positions of advantage, the holding of the village by the Boers would be rendered impossible.

The Boer tactics were those of aggressive defense which inferior forces are induced to adopt, when the nature of the terrain enables strong positions to be held by a few men, while the greater number have to be employed in preventing the outflanking maneuvers of the enemy.

The hilly country southwest of Colesberg was adapted to the employment of these tactics, and enabled the Boers to hold their

own against French's greatly superior forces in men and guns. Fighting was continued along a very extended line, over an area of fifteen or twenty miles, and partook largely of surprise attacks upon detached bodies or posts engaged in turning or scouting operations.

During the first week of January General French employed all his command in a series of attempts to drive his opponents off the hills south of Colesberg into the village, and to capture a prominent and symmetrical hill which dominated the entire country from its position, some four or five miles southwest of the town.

A secondary position on a kopje west of the town was held by the German corps of fifty men, with as many Johannesburgers under Jacob Celliers, cooperating.

These were attacked from right to left by a large force of the enemy with guns. A spirited encounter followed for several hours when, after repulsing a charge by 500 or 600 of the enemy, Celliers retired to another position, allowing his foes to occupy the vacated hill. That night Commandant Piet De Wet with a body of 200 Free Staters went to the support of Celliers, and the combined forces gained a footing nearer the captured hill and awaited the morning's light to attack and retake it. The English had, however, also strengthened their hold on the kopje by additional men and four guns, and a determined fight which lasted for several hours, on the 4th of January, was the result.

During the engagement, General Schoeman attempted to cooperate with Piet De Wet by attacking the enemy's right with a relieving force of 500 men. The effort was not successful, as French succeeded in throwing a superior force with a battery of guns in between the two Boer positions, with the result that De Wet and Schoeman were forced back nearer Colesberg, after five hours' fighting, with a loss of 50 or 60 men.

A combat with some of the features of the old style of warfare took place during the fight for the hill, which riveted the attention of both forces while it lasted. Thirty burghers retiring from the kopje held by Piet De Wet were crossing the field of battle to a ridge where the Johannesburg Police were, as usual, more than holding their own, and were making vigorous use of their automatic guns. The movement of the mounted burghers was observed by two companies of Lancers, who immediately galloped towards them over the level ground. The Boers seeing the dusty horsemen coming from near a position which had been held by some of Schoeman's men earlier in the morning, believed them to be friends, and did not fully discover their mistake until a space of 100 yards alone divided the two mounted forces. On recognizing

the enemy's men, the Boers leaped from their horses and opened fire upon the Lancers, almost at point-blank range. The first line of horses was shot and the gallop of the English was arrested, when the superior Boer rifle and more accurate aim of the burghers soon decided the issue of the combat. Only six of the 70 or 80 Lancers were seen riding back to their lines from the scene of the brief but decisive encounter.

The result of the four or five days' desultory fighting was the gradual retirement of Piet De Wet and Schoeman nearer to the town, but to the occupation of stronger positions more immediately around it. One of these was a hill, three miles north of the village, which, next to Coleskop, was deemed by French to be the key of his opponent's strong lines of defense at Colesberg.

It was resolved by French to attempt to carry this hill by a surprise attack under cover of darkness, and some 200 of the Suffolk Regiment, led by Colonel Watson, were charged with the carrying out of this daring enterprise.

The hill being so far north of the British lines was thought by the Boers to be safe from assault, and it was only held by a body of 100 Free Staters, Heilbron men, on that Saturday morning, the 6th of January. Away on another ridge, distant about three miles, a detachment of Johannesburg Police were located, and while these were in at the finish of the fight which followed, the honors of the signal victory won in the early morning hours belonged to the Heilbron burghers alone, who have scored so many more triumphs since then under General Christian De Wet.

Watson and his Suffolks set out from their lines about midnight. The men had muffled their shoes with soft covering so as to steal silently along on their daring errand with as little noise as possible. Guides from the locality were employed who knew every yard of the distance, and so well carried out was the plucky plan to seize the kopje that Watson and his men had reached the very slope of the coveted hill just before dawn in the morning, and before a single Boer had heard or seen anything of the advancing Suffolks.

The sentinel's Mauser ahead of the Heilbron men rang out its startling signal of danger, and in an instant the enemy's further progress up the side of the kop was arrested by fire of the alert burghers. The fighting took place in the semi-darkness of the early summer morning, but so cool and well directed was the work of the Heilbroners that half of the storming Tommies, including Colonel Watson, were shot down in a few moments. Most of those who were not hit raced down the hill, only to be met a short time afterward by the Rand Police to whom those of the Suffolks

who were not hit surrendered as soon as the full light of the morning revealed the full dangers of the situation.

The English lost a hundred killed and wounded in this engagement, while the other hundred hoisted the white flag and laid down their arms.

The Heilbron men's loss in the fight was 7 men killed and 12 wounded.

So close were the English in formation when they were first fired upon that twenty-seven dead bodies were found within an area of twenty yards.

When the task of the ambulance began one of these Tommies was found riddled with bullets from his knees upward, so near were the combatants, and so deadly was the burgher fire.

Colonel Watson was shot through the head at the very front of his men; a Boer whom it is believed the English officer had himself killed being found close to the body of the dead colonel.

Following the defeat of the Suffolks, Piet De Wet and Schoeman took the aggressive in a two days' series of detached engagements, and forced the enemy back again southward over the old ground in the direction of Rensburg. On the 9th of January General De la Rey arrived from Magersfontein as fighting general, and the presence of this splendid officer with his quiet, self-confident bearing and magnetic qualities infused greater confidence into the Federal forces. Commandant Van Dam with the remainder of the Johannesburg Police Corps arrived also as a reenforcement, and De la Rey lost no time in forcing the fighting.

French had likewise been reenforced, but by a much larger body of troops and guns; still the great prestige of De la Rey and his reputation for a series of triumphs gained without, as yet, a single defeat at the hands of the enemy, put the burghers and Cape Volunteers in the best fighting spirit, and soon the lines round Colesberg were held in greater confidence than before, with the English forced into the adoption of defensive tactics.

On the 15th of January a body of Australian troopers with some English cavalry surprised and took a hill called the Zwartsrand which had been held by a few burghers. The attacking force was 300 strong, and they easily gained and held the position for a time. What occurred in the incident I am about to relate will not be doubted by those of the enemy who may have fought during the war against the Rand Police.

Eight men of Van Dam's renowned Police Corps, believing that the Zwartsrand was occupied by no more than 20 or 30 of the enemy, rode at the position in a spur gallop, dismounted at the bottom of the hill, and deliberately charged the kopje; coolly

mounting and firing into the ranks of the Colonials and British on the top. On discovering the extent of the force which was thus audaciously attacked, the eight "Zarps" beat a hasty retreat, leaving one killed and three of their number wounded; the other four succeeding in making good their escape; owing, in all human probability, let us hope, to the fact that the 300 Britishers were none too willing to fire further upon men capable of attempting so plucky an exploit.

A small body of burghers, numbering only thirty men, believing a position held by some New Zealanders was not in possession of more than fifty of the enemy, charged it and fell into an ambush of Yorkshires and New Zealand troopers, 150 strong. Three-fourths of the burghers were killed or captured.

A few days following this Boer mishap, an almost indentical encounter took place, with the fortunes of war reversed; a score of Australian horsemen finding themselves surrounded by superior forces and compelled to surrender to Piet De Wet's men.

On the 5th of February a detachment under De la Rey, who were hotly engaged with a body of British near a place called Polfontein resorted to a stratagem borrowed from the military tactics of the ancients. Being in greatly inferior numbers, and as the English held the stronger position, the burghers collected about 100 horses from spare mounts and neighboring farms, and, driving them into something like a line, whipped them straight across the open space between the opposing forces. The enemy fired on the galloping horses, but this in no way arrested their frantic career over the veldt. Behind the flying steeds the burghers charged safely over the ground and, taking advantage of the confusion caused by the horses, shot the enemy back upon French's main lines at Rasfontein.

De la Rey now pushed his lines southward towards Rensburg, adopting against the enemy's right a turning movement similar to that which the British had been attempting for a month towards the corresponding right of their opponents. General French, however, left the English lines round Colesberg early in February, for Cape Town, from whence he joined Lord Roberts for his great movement against Cronje at Magersfontein, leaving the British army at Rensburg in command of General Clements. A few days subsequently De la Rey caught up with the rear guard of the retiring enemy north of Rensburg Siding, and in a short but brilliant encounter forced over 150 of the Wiltshire Regiment to surrender, after some forty-nine of the British had been killed.

This action was followed in a few days by a desperate fight between Colesberg and Rensburg in which the honors were claimed

on both sides. Some 500 of De la Rey's men made a night attack upon a regiment which held a hill at Slingusfontein. It was an action similar to that in which Colonel Watson and the Suffolks suffered so severely in January. The burghers gained the enemy's position at midnight, and pushed their way, under the darkness, close to the Worcestershire men, some 700 strong, who were well sheltered by stone sangars. The first of the enemy's lines was carried, the Boers shooting with great accuracy even in the dark. As the morning light appeared, however, the comparative weakness of the attacking force was seen, and the defending British began to make it exceedingly warm for the midnight visitors.

Guns were brought into play on the British side from the nearest of the enemy's lines, and a large number of the burghers were shot down as they advanced. The men held their ground with great tenacity until De la Rey was enabled to send up reenforcements from the Rand Police. With these the burghers on the hill maintained the combat all the day. When night came on again, both sides resolved to abandon the hill, in the mutual belief that the other's hold upon it could not be shaken. On the following morning the British were found to have evacuated the position and fallen back again upon Rensburg. The losses during this twelve hours' fighting were almost equal; about 100 men being killed and wounded on each side.

From this time forth De la Rey beat his opponents at every engagement, capturing small bodies of Australian troops, of Inniskillings, and others of Clements' somewhat disorganized army. The absence of French seemed to have dispirited the enemy's troops, and they made but a poor stand against the increasing attacks and dash of the inspirited burghers. The English were compelled to even evacuate Rensburg, and to retreat still further south towards Naauwpoort Junction.

Meanwhile, events were shaping themselves 150 miles further northwest where, at this very time, General French at the head of 5,000 horsemen was making his famous dash from Ramdam on Kimberley, with Lord Roberts following in his wake with 40,000 men with whom to smash Cronje's commandoes and bar their way eastward to Bloemfontein.

De la Rey was called from the scene of his month's brilliant campaign round Colesberg to the theater of impending disaster near Paardeberg. He left Generals Grobler, Lemmer, Ollivier, and Schoeman with the Free State burghers and Cape Volunteers to guard the positions which had been so successfully held against French and Clements, taking only Van Dam and the Rand Police force with him to the Modder River, near Koedesrand, where he

expected to meet the combined Magersfontein and other Boers of the western Federal army in position to stop Roberts' movement on the Free State capital.

The story of how and why De la Rey did not find his anticipations realized, will be told in the chapter dealing with the dramatic surrender of General Cronje near the place where, had De la Rey been at the head of the men under Cronje's command, Lord Roberts' huge army would have met with its Sedan.

A story of the prowess of one Daniel Viljoen, of Germiston, has gone the round of the Free State laagers, and was told me by so many narrators that it merits recording. In the running fight between De la Rey's men and the Wiltshire regiment, near Rensburg, Dan Viljoen, a quiet, modest burgher of herculean build, and a dead shot, found himself on a turn of a road in front of seventeen of the Wiltshire Tommies. . He instantly shouted, "Hands up, my men are behind!" and the seventeen Britishers believed him, threw down their arms, held up their hands, and were marched into De la Rey's ranks as prisoners by the Germiston hero.

We return again to the progress of events on the Tugela.

Chapter XXIX

SIEGE OF LADYSMITH ABANDONED

BRITISH DEMONSTRATION IN FORCE—BATTLE OF VAAL KRANTZ—HOW VILJOEN SAVED THE POM-POM—BOERS RETAKE VAAL KRANTZ—BOTHA'S REPORT OF BATTLE—BULLER SEIZES LANGWANI HILL—AGAIN CROSSES THE TUGELA—BATTLE OF GROBLER'S KLOOF—BATTLE OF PIETER'S HILL—SURRENDER OF THE INNISKILLINGS—BULLER'S USE OF ARMISTICE—EVACUATION OF PIETER'S HILL—BOTHA'S MASTERLY RETREAT—KRUGER'S PROCLAMATION—END OF INVASIONS OF NATAL.

ON Sunday night, February 4, patrols returned from across the river with the information that another forward movement was about to take place on the part of the enemy. General Botha was in Pretoria on a visit to his family, and General Lukas Meyer was in command at Colenso. General Schalk Burger was, therefore, in charge of the burghers on the Upper and Middle Tugela, with General Tobias Smuts of Ermelo, and Commandants Viljoen and Andries Cronje as most prominent officers next in rank. The British were found massing behind Mount Alice and the Swartzkop, which they still held, with the apparent intention of crossing again at Potgieter's Drift, where Lyttleton's forces had gone over previously as a feint to mask Warren's operations further west. Cycle despatch-riders were sent at once to all the Boer positions east and west of Burger's laager at Brakfontein, while telegrams were forwarded to Botha and Meyer.

Early on Monday morning the naval guns on Mount Alice opened fire upon the hills north of Potgieter's, while a large body of British troops passed over by the Drift and advanced tentatively towards the high ridges, immediately east of Spion Kop, held by the Senekal commando. This movement was soon found to be more of a reconnaissance and of a containing effort than a frontal attack; the object being to locate the Boer guns and forces. There was no response to the enemy's artillery, nor any sign of occupation on the plateau, until the British had advanced to within some 1,500 yards of the entrenched burghers. Then the Mausers and Krupps sang out their defiant reply to the thunder of lyddite batteries and field guns, and so well directed was the fire of the Federals that the enemy's movement was arrested. The English guns across the river con-

tinued to play upon the hills in front, but nothing could shake the burghers' hold upon their positions, and the enemy fell back on the Drift, shelled by the two Boer Krupps from Brakfontein in their retreat.

This demonstration in force was, however, only intended to mask a determined attack upon the hills east of Brakfontein, three or four miles nearer Colenso, where two drifts crossed the Tugela, leading through the defile of Patrol Spruit which is the shortest road from the river to Ladysmith. These drifts were immediately under Swartzkop, and the English had carried a battery of twelve-

COMMANDANT BEN VILJOEN AND STAFF

pound naval guns on to this hill during Sunday night. A pontoon bridge was also thrown across the river on Monday at the most eastern passage, Skiet Drift, while no less than fifty additional guns were so placed that they commanded all the positions occupied by the burghers.

These operations on Monday morning did not find the burghers unprepared. Opposite Swartzkop, to the east of Brakfontein, a high hill called Doorn Kop was occupied by a Long Tom, while the guns which had been so well served at Spion Kop were in position along the ridge each side of the defile through which the road passed on to Ladysmith. To the left of where the pontoon bridge was thrown over the river, a small kopje called Vaal Krantz stood, under the shadow of a higher hill to its left, with Doorn Kop again

to the left of that. The chief Boer positions, therefore, extended from Spion Kop eastward to the hills to the left of Doorn Kop, and the crossing of the Tugela by the English at Skiet's Drift was to mean a direct attack upon the low hill of Vaal Krantz, which was occupied by 50 men of Ben Viljoen's Rand Brigade, and some 30 of the Standerton commando. This small force, with a single pom-pom, held this more or less isolated position in accordance with the usual tactics of the Boers. These plans invariably invited the enemy's first attack upon a secondary Boer position—one held well within range of concealed guns behind, or to the left or right, as the nature of the terrain would suggest. The British would concentrate artillery fire and troops upon this secondary position, in response to a challenging fire, and if the burghers were driven out by numbers or guns, the British would rush the place only to be found within closer range of a combined rifle and artillery fire from the hitherto masked main force of their adversaries.

This was what happened at Vaal Krantz, but the fight which was there made by Ben Viljoen and his handful of Rand burghers and Uitlanders is probably a feat of sheer indomitable pluck which has never been surpassed in the history of civilized warfare. This hill, which was neither high nor precipitous, stood back about a mile from a sharp bend in the river, and was within range, if not within actual vision, of no less than seventy English guns, including all the navals on Swartzkop. Under cover of these ten batteries a force of some 3,000 troops, advancing in extended order, attacked this hill, and for fully seven hours the eighty men under Viljoen held their ground in magnificent defiance of that combined attack.

The fight with the Johannesburgers began with the construction of the pontoon bridge in the morning. A contingent of Viljoen's Brigade and Du Preez on one side, and a small body of the same command led by Field Cornet Mostert on the other, harassed the enemy with a brisk rifle fire while the bridge was being erected. The English guns, however, cleared the way for the infantry after several hours' bombardment, when the real attack on Vaal Krantz commenced. This was made, as already mentioned, by some 3,000 of the enemy's troops, who extended out right and left with the object of completely enveloping the hill where Viljoen and his handful of heroes were entrenched. It reads as a record of an almost impossible action to speak of so small a body withstanding such an attack from so overwhelming a force, but there is no better authenticated fact in the whole story of the war than that which attests the unsurpassed gallantry of Viljoen and his men at Vaal Krantz, for "Not even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer" the spectacle of such a brilliant feat of determined valor,

coolness, endurance, and resource as was shown on that Monday by the Rand men.

Three direct infantry attacks on Viljoen's position were repulsed, when he found it no longer possible to hold his own ground without surrender or extermination. Of his force of eighty men one-third had been killed or wounded; the first of the killed being an Irishman named Michael Fahey. By this time, too, the enemy's right were within 300 yards of Viljoen's left. How was the pom-pom to be saved? This was the problem to be solved amidst that torrent of lyddite, shrapnel, and bullets which had rained upon that kopje during the seven hours' contest. Away to Viljoen's right, at a distance of half a mile, behind a projecting ridge, there was shelter, but to reach this place an open space of some 500 or 600 yards had to be crossed under all this incessant fire. Viljoen resolved at all costs to save his gun. He directed the remnant of his men to concentrate their fire on the enemy's lines nearest the route which he and the service of the gun were to take, and then at the given signal out dashed the limber, with horses lashed into a furious gallop, tearing over the open space, in a wild and frantic rush for safety. Shells burst now in front, now behind, all round the flying horses; bullets pursued the drivers and escort as with backs bent, but with reins held in the hands of heroes, the burghers in charge cleared the space with lives and gun intact, only to halt round the first protecting ridge, to unlimber again, face round and ply once more their deadly pom-pom shells upon the enemy's lines. To the credit of human nature be it recorded that some of the English Tommies who witnessed this thrilling act of bravery cheered the foemen who had thus displayed a feat which made all men proud that such acts could be performed in contempt of all the perils that lay athwart the path of duty. The remnant of the Rand men vacated Vaal Krantz, and the English occupied it with a feeling that all the credit and glory of the day had gone with the defenders of the hill, save where the dead and the wounded lying around shared in the triumphs of a misnamed defeat for Viljoen and his eighty heroes.

Traveling night and day from Pretoria Louis Botha reached the field of battle on Tuesday at noon, and took immediate charge of the burgher forces. He brought with him some of the men from round Ladysmith, and, on making himself acquainted with the enemy's lines and dispositions, assumed the aggressive in a sustained artillery fire upon the troops who had taken possession of Vaal Krantz. This fight, mainly with guns, lasted Tuesday and Wednesday; the English, despite their enormous preponderance of men and cannon, failing to advance a single step nearer Ladysmith

than the hill so dearly won on Monday afternoon. So well directed was Botha's furious fire from all his splendidly mobile commandoes, that Buller's huge force was made powerless for all aggressive purposes, and had to put itself in a defensive attitude against the plan of battle which the level-headed young farmer had evolved out of the mistakes made by his opponent. Once on Tuesday a Boer force attempted to recapture Vaal Krantz, but the effort was not successful. Again, on Wednesday night an attack was delivered against a body of reenforcements sent over the river by the enemy to relieve

VILJOEN'S COMMANDO DEFENDING VAAL KRANTZ

the troops who had been on the hill since Monday. These aggressive attentions of Botha's were intended to show the enemy that the burghers who barred the road to Ladysmith were confident in their capacity to defend their lines even to the extent of charging those of their foemen. Once more victory rested with the Vierkleur. The general who had cabled to England after Spion Kop that he had found the key to Ladysmith, and would be there in a week, had to amend his message on Thursday, February 8, and say that the key would not turn, and that he was once more south of the Tugela with his 31,000 men and 72 guns; his force having been increased following the reverse of the 24th of January.

When the burghers regained the slopes of Vaal Krantz on Thursday they found the bodies of twenty-two of the Rand men

who had been killed on Monday lying unburied; while six wounded burghers, among them being a young son of ex-President Brand, of the Free State, were also found, who related that they had neither been offered food nor drink nor attention by the British on the hill during the two days and nights they had lain there exposed! General Botha expressed himself in the strongest terms of indignation at this evidence of callous British conduct towards helpless and disabled foes, while George Brand, an elder brother of one of the men thus barbarously neglected, told me afterward, when I was sharing his tent in the Orange Free State, that he would remember that inhuman treatment of his brother as long as the war would last.

On the reoccupation of the hill a number of broken Lee-Metfords were found in the English trenches. These damaged rifles gave rise to a Boer story that a number of the Tommies who had held the kopje from Monday to Wednesday had refused to fire or fight any longer in a position which they deemed to be as hopeless as Spion Kop, and that it was this state of feeling among the soldiers on Vaal Krantz which compelled Buller to ferry them again to the south bank of the Tugela.

The British losses in the attempt to get past Vaal Krantz were light in comparison with the duration of the contest; a fact due to the careful cover taken by the troops in their advance upon Viljoen's positions. Buller's casualties amounted to about 300 all told. The Boer losses were largely those of Viljoen's brigade, and are referred to in the following brief account of the battle sent by General Botha to Mrs. Botha, on Friday, February 9:

"From Monday to yesterday evening there has been heavy fighting. I arrived on the scene early on Tuesday. Commandant Ben Viljoen had a fearful heavy day on Monday, on account of himself and 50 burghers being subjected to a terrible bombardment at their position, under cover of which the enemy succeeded in crossing the river, and attacked the kop guarded by the Rand commando. These 'klompje' burghers stood gallantly in defense, until quite two-thirds of them were killed and wounded.

"We have resisted the British attacks along the whole line from Tuesday to last night, during which the enemy, while retreating south, also completely destroyed the three bridges recently made by them.

"Our loss up to last night was 30 killed and 15 wounded.

"Again we must thank God that the powerful British enemy has had to retreat in front of our small number."

The tide of Boer victory was destined, however, to ebb soon

after the brilliant action of the Rand men at Vaal Krantz. The unequal fight, so long and so successfully waged between forces more unequal in men and guns than ever contended in civilized warfare, could not long continue after four months' duration, without the side having the huge legions making headway by sheer force of numbers. England had poured her men into South Africa from almost all parts of her world-wide Empire. I recollect General Botha handing me a telegram at Glencoe in May which had just reached him from General De la Rey at Brandfort, announcing Lord Roberts' advance over the veldt from the hills above the Modder River. The message said, in pathetic eloquence, "They are swarming over like locusts! I cannot shoot them back!" And so it was with Botha and his little army of 5,000 burghers in Natal. Their ranks had been thinned in every fight, and no recruits came to fill the gaps. The Republics had put their last fighting men in the field, while the British levies were rolling on over the seas in endless processions of transport ships, leaving a trail of smoke on the horizon almost from London to Cape Town, as an army of stokers raced the fleets and steamers along with their crowded cargoes of men and munitions.

Cronje had not followed up the great victory at Magersfontein by any action of any kind that would lessen the strain upon Botha, or make for the better safety of Bloemfontein in face of Lord Roberts' arrival, and of his preparations for an advance on the Free State capital. This supreme movement of the British would, if successful, render the position of the Federal forces in Natal perilous, and the news of Roberts' presence at the Modder River on the 9th of February was ominous information for the valiant little army of the Tugela, which had for two months been the only portion of the Federal armies, excepting De la Rey's and Ollivier's commandoes around Colesberg, engaged in a continuous field campaign against the enemy.

On Monday, the 12th of February, 300 of the Middelburg commando patrolling near the Blaaukrantz Spruit, south of Colenso, were engaged by a force of some 800 of the enemy who had ridden north from Chieveley on reconnaissance purposes. The British retired after some firing, and the burghers returned with information that preparations were being made for another attack. Large bodies of Buller's troops were observed, on the two following days, moving northeastward towards the ridges south of Langwani, but beyond skirmishes between patrols on both sides, and a repetition of the old cannonading by the British naval guns, no serious engagement occurred. The old positions at Colenso were fully reoccupied by the burghers withdrawn from the Upper Tugela, and by the 18th

Botha and Meyer were again prepared with the same force to dispute Buller's fourth attempt to pass the river.

It was seen, however, as the movements of the enemy were developed, that his immediate objective was not Colenso, but Langwani and the hills still further eastward. These latter hills were only held by small parties of burghers, and any large movement of the enemy on these positions, with the object of turning the extreme Boer left, would render Langwani Hill untenable in its isolated location south of the Tugela. Events were to show on the early morning of Sunday, February 18, that Buller had at last found the key to the door which might unlock the way to Ladysmith.

Once the Federal left was turned east of Langwani, the retention of that hill by the small Boer force which held it became impossible. There was also the doubt as to whether the enemy would attempt to cross the river at a drift west of Pieter's Station, in the north bend of the Tugela, or force a way by Colenso with Langwani in his possession. Tactically, Buller ought to have done both —to have crossed simultaneously with his huge force, as he might have done—but his former experiences deterred him from following up the advantage gained by his right in the seizure of the Boshrand and Randges Hills.

The possession of these hills and of Langwani was spiritedly contested by the Middelburg, Swaziland, Bethel, and Ermelo commandoes, on the 18th, but the forces against them were fully twenty to one, while the loss of the positions on their extreme left made a continued effort to hold the lines south of the river a mere sacrifice of burgher life; so Botha's men fell back, and crossed to the north side of the stream. The loss in the fighting on and around the hills was not heavy, but the loss of the possession of Langwani was felt as a stunning blow to the operations in Natal. The fire of the big Creusot gun from near Pieter's Railway Station during the attack on the Boer commandoes across the river was very effective, as was also the action of the pom-poms, and the British losses numbered more than 150 in the engagement of the 18th.

On the 21st Buller resolved to try his luck at Colenso again, having now the whole south bank of the Tugela in his possession; his object being to force a way past Grobler's Kloof, which would be the easiest, if not the shortest, way to the lines south of Ladysmith, where he could receive the assistance of White's guns at Caesar's Camp. Reports had doubtless reached the English lines that Prinsloo's Free Staters had left the defending positions north of Colenso, and had retired through Van Reenan's Pass to meet the invasion of their own country by Roberts' army, and this news may

have determined Buller to resolve upon making a second Colenso redeem the disaster of the first. But the burghers of Colenso first, and of Spion Kop, tho reduced in numbers, were still a body of fighters to be reckoned with, and as the English negotiated the Tugela by two pontoon bridges on that Wednesday morning, they found the ridges in front held by Botha's men, with never a sign that they were going to allow untoward events to slacken their fire or unnerve their souls in the fight against the enemy of their homes and country.

The British crossed the river in large force east and west of Colenso, covered by guns from the hills eastward; no opposition being offered beyond a rifle attack by the Boxburg and Heidelberg men, who were posted in the river bed. These retired on the positions along the Onderbroek Spruit road, the British following. They were allowed to approach near to where the Middelburg and Ermelo men were located, when these opened such a terrific fire upon them that they retreated back to the river, leaving 150 killed and wounded behind, and no further attempt was made that day to get past a spot so well defended. On Thursday the Boer guns were located where they commanded the two roads by Pieter's Station and Grobler's Kloof, and with Buller's immediate intentions now pretty well understood, it was resolved that he should only pass to Ladysmith over the bodies of the burghers in front of him.

The two positions most strongly held by Botha and Meyer were Pieter's Hill and Grobler's Kloof; the railway and a roadway to Ladysmith running in between. The Middelburg men, under the gallant Commandant Fourie, were on the east slope of Grobler's, and the Krugersdorp and Rustenburg men holding the western slope of Pieter's Hill opposite, under two men as brave as any who ever fought for freedom—Commandant Potgieter, of Rustenburg, who took the surrender of Jameson and his Raiders in 1896, and Sarel Oosthuizen, a hero of fifty fights, the valiant Field Cornet of Krugersdorp.

The first direct attack of the enemy on Thursday was upon Commandant Fourie's position, after the hill had been subjected for two hours to a continuous cannonading. The English crept forward under cover of this fire, slowly and cautiously, in a widely extended line. They were men of Lancashire regiments, some of whom had been on Spion Kop. No enemy of the hated cause they fought for will think them less brave for feeling, as they must have felt, that they were marching to death or disablement two miles ahead of 20,000 other troops down by the river, who were not allowed to climb these heights in the might of numbers and sweep the few Boers in front before seven times their force of

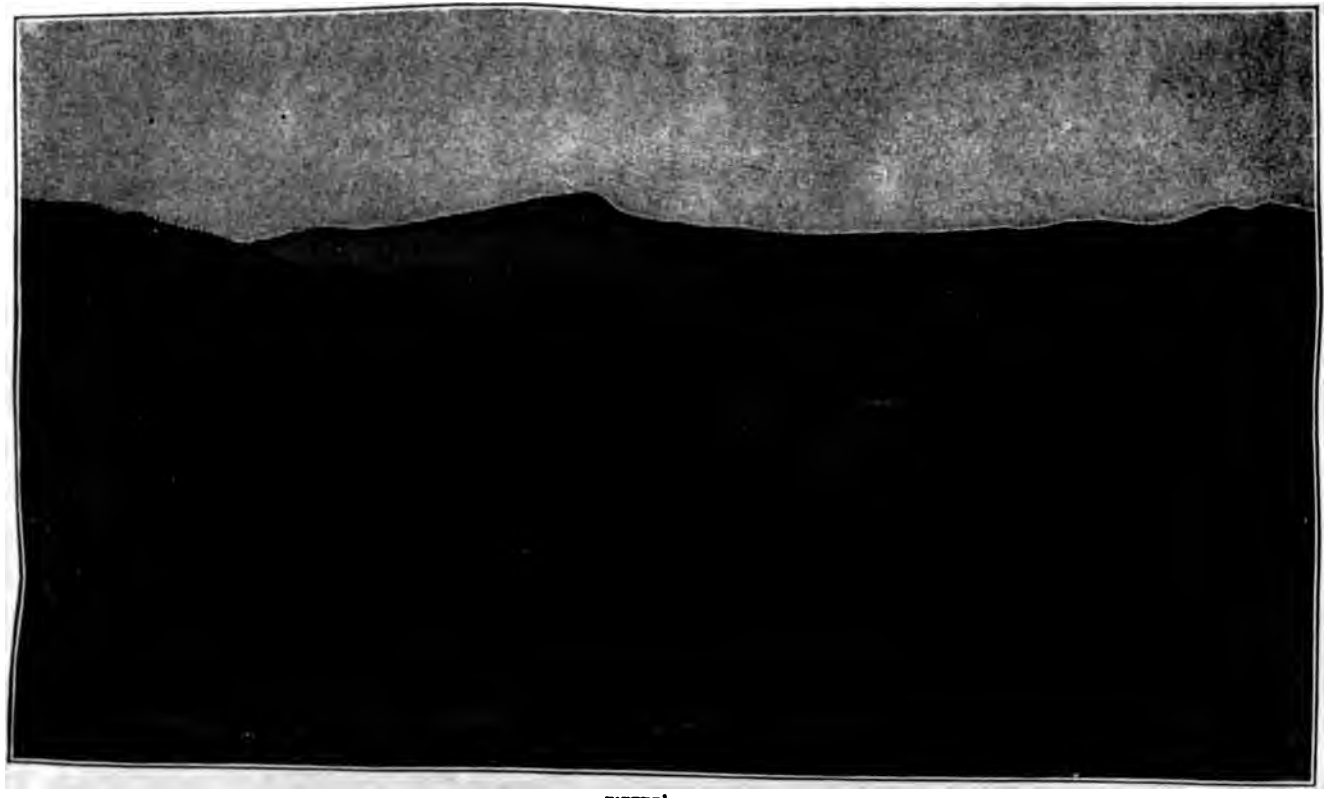
British adversaries. On they came, until within 400 yards of Fourie's Middelburgers, when there was a crash of leaden thunder, and down went the Lancashire lads in scores before the wall of rifles in front. They wavered, rallied again like the plucky "Lancs" of their fighting county, but there would be no taking of that hillside on that day with Fourie and his burghers to defend it. Back again to the river went the broken lines of the enemy's battalions, beaten once more by fewer but braver men.

Night came on; the English dead and wounded lay out under the starry heavens, with no hands to minister to the wants of those still needing human care; the enemy in his thousands down below at the river, careless or indifferent, thinking only of a possible victory by a further sacrifice of more hired troops on the morrow. The Boers were in their trenches, rifles in hand, as if never in need of sleep, in their vigilant guardianship of the ground committed to their protection.

Friday morning woke serene and bright over the still smoking battle-field. Again began the bloody program of the previous day. Lyddite and shrapnel from navals, howitzers, and field pieces deluged the ridges which crossed the path to Ladysmith, after which the usual advance of infantry was to come. The Boers adopted their invariable common-sense tactics, and remained silent, waiting for the real assault when their enemies should arrive within the range of rifles. The Middelburgers were once more the object of the enemy's first attention as on the previous evening, but there is only the same story to tell of the attempt to take the ridge, and what followed. Fourie and his burghers held their ground, and their foes were driven back after repeated charges, hundreds of dead and wounded being left behind, as on the day before.

This, however, was only the first item in this Friday's program. Three attacks by English regiments had been delivered, and had failed on the Middelburg position. It was now resolved by Buller to assail the position to the left, Pieter's Hill, and the troops selected for the task consisted mainly of General Hart's 5th Brigade. Inniskillings, Dublin Fusiliers, and Connaught Rangers were the chief regiments of this brigade, with other troops added to increase the weight of numbers for the task in hand.

Pieter's Hill, where the Krugersdorp burghers were in position, rises gradually to a height of 1,000 feet above the north bank of the Tugela, in a slope which can be negotiated easily on horseback. To the left (looking south from the Boer positions) there is a drift over the river; to the immediate right the railway and a road to Ladysmith passes, with the Onderbroeck ridges and Grobler's Kloof rising parallel on the west; and north, or back, of Pieter's Hill the



PIETER'S MILL

railway station is located. The Boer lines, somewhat crescent-shaped in formation, extended over these points; a hill east of the waterfall being Botha's left, and the ridges along the Onderbroeck Spruit being the right—the two roads and the railway to Ladysmith running in between, through long and narrow valleys.

Langwani Hill, south of the river, is immediately opposite Pieter's Hill, at a distance of some 7,000 yards, and the entire Boer positions were open from there to Buller's artillery attacks; the naval guns being able to rake every point of ground occupied by Botha's men. The other English batteries, numbering sixty more guns, were mostly on the south side of the river, and all within range distance of the places held by the burghers. Every advance by infantry upon any point of attack was preceded by a bombardment of Buller's entire artillery, and this fact has to be borne in mind when the reader is asked to judge on the relative claims to admiration of the men who charged and those who defended the positions on Pieter's Hill on the 23rd of February. No finer exhibition of endurance, pluck, and nerve has ever been made in warfare than that of the 400 burghers who held that hill against fully fifty guns and repeated attacks of Hart's 5th Brigade.

The morning had been signalized by the repulse of the troops sent against the positions on the Boer right, and early in the afternoon of that memorable Friday, the three regiments named, along with two English regiments as supports, were advanced against Pieter's Hill.

The Inniskillings had been sent in a night march up from Colenso along the river to assail the hill from the east in conjunction with the Connaughts, who followed; the Dublins' duty being to protect the flank of the attacking force. The troops were discovered early in the morning by the Ermelo men, who accounted for about fifty of their foemen. This attack was made from a small hill above the waterfall, near the Boer left. The object of Hart's men, however, was to assault the position on Pieter's Hill, west of where they had been fired upon, and, after leaving some men to protect their rear, they moved over some ridges to where the attack on Pieter's was to be delivered.

At this point the Inniskillings and Connaughts were joined by the Dublins, and the whole awaited the order to charge the hill to their right, up the sloping sides of which they would have to move after crossing an intervening space of a few hundred yards, which place alone in the work before them would bring them under the fire of the Boer guns to the north.

It was well on in the afternoon when the order to advance was given, and the three famed British regiments swept westward

from the hills they had gained down to the hollow from which they were to climb the eastern and southern sides of the hill in front of them. They went over the ground in wide order, seeking cover where available, while in front of them—but perilously near their own leading ranks—the shells from Buller's guns shricked and burst over the heads of Boer and Briton alike. The Inniskillings were on the left of the advancing brigade, the Dublins in the center, and the Connaughts in the back and on the right; the first of these regiments being in advance in the movement up the hill. On they came, the Boer guns north being unable to fire on to the reverse side of the intervening hill up which the English were mounting. But it was not a day or a case for guns, but for men and rifles, and there amidst that inferno of bursting shells, facing these 2,000 trained soldiers with bayonets gleaming in the sun, the 400 young farmers lay waiting, picking out their targets from among those sons of English and Irish mothers slowly climbing that hill to find a grave beneath its grassy slopes. Suddenly from the left flank of the Inniskillings a fusillade was opened, before the Krugersdorpers in front had yet fired. It was some of the Ermelo men under Tobias Smuts who had followed up the enemy from the left, and no sooner had these opened upon the Inniskillings than crash went the hail of bullets from the 400 Mausers into the troops in front of them, again and again, as with an exulting cheer of defiance and contempt for bayonets the men under Sarel Oosthuizen and Potgieter sprang over their sangars, firing almost point blank into their foes, and rolling them down the hill broken and dismayed. Back again to the trenches went the Boers, and up again, under persuasion, example, and threats of officers, came the Inniskillings; this time the Dublins being in front, the Connaughts remaining below; all moving over ground on which hundreds of their fellows were lying, many never to advance or retreat again. Once again the English guns miscalculated the distance; Boer officers and men allege other grounds for what happened; but, be that as it may, there was again, as at Talana Hill—also in the case of Irish regiments—shells falling in their ranks; as happened likewise at Colenso, Spion Kop, Magersfontein, and other battles. With deadly riflemen in front and inexpert gunners behind, the British troops moved forward resolutely, bravely, only to find an impossible barrier of fire and death before them, which no men in khaki should pass that day. Down the hill once more went some of those who came up; this time the retreat being a veritable race between Inniskillings, Dublins, and others who should reach the river first. Six hundred men of Hart's Brigade remained on Pieter's Hill, dead and wounded. A few hundred who were unwounded could not get

away from the ring of fire drawn round them. They remained on the field all night; fired at from front by the Boers, and from behind by their own guns; while, as Lieutenant Best, of the Innis-

GENERAL TOBIAS SMUTS

killings, related in an interview after surrender, "On Friday night, at dusk, appreciating the hopelessness of our position and with the view of saving our wounded from unnecessary exposure, I hoisted the white flag. There were so few of us left! It being

dusk, your people in the trenches did not see our signal, and they continued shooting during the night. My conjecture is they suspected treachery. Our own artillerists on Monte Christo and elsewhere, probably not knowing we were there, so close upon you, poured shell after shell into us—those that fell a little short of your entrenchments, you know—and in this way some of ours were also unwittingly maimed and killed. Oh, it was ghastly! At dawn I raised the white flag again and again, and your people finally came down and disarmed us, and here we are—those that are left of us."

On Saturday morning the fight was renewed, but mainly by artillery; the Boer guns having been removed to better ground during the night time, and being thus able to shell those who held the valley south to Colenso, as well as the troops who clung to the river bank below the shambles on Pieter's Hill. All this time the wounded were unattended to. Scores of them bled to death; others less severely hit suffered agonies from thirst; while over and above all this horror the British shells came pitilessly on to the sides of Pieter's Hill, aimed at the Boer positions, and still falling among the English dead and disabled.

The artillery combat of Saturday was succeeded by a cessation of hostilities on Sunday, following the invariable custom of the Boers not to fight on the Sabbath unless attacked. The Boer general agreed to an armistice, which, like that granted after Spion Kop, was used by Buller for military, and not alone for humane, purposes. Under cover of this truce Buller took his forces once more over the river, and registered his fourth defeat at Botha's hands.

No less than 1,600 British were killed, wounded, and taken prisoner during the continued fight from the 18th to the 23rd; over 1,000 of those falling before the rifles of the burghers defending Pieter's Hill. The Boer loss was, as usual, comparatively small, tho on this occasion it was relatively high for the number of burghers who had borne the brunt of Buller's artillery fire, and of the attack by Hart's Brigade. Thirty-one killed and 130 wounded were given as representing the united losses of the whole Boer forces engaged from the 18th to the 25th, Commandant Potgieter being included among the severely wounded. The Krugersdorp men lost 14 killed and 31 wounded, the Middelburg, Ermelo, and Rustenburg commandoes coming next in the list of casualties, which was officially published in the Boer press on the 2nd of March, 1900.

Buller made good use of the armistice. Realizing how unshakeable was the hold which Botha held of the two roads passing from Colenso to Ladysmith, the English general abandoned the task of

forcing a passage there, and directed his fifth attempt by the way it had been feared he would have carried his first effort to cross on the 15th of December. He held Colenso and Langwani Hill, and, pretending to withdraw his forces south of the river again for rest and recuperation, he swung his whole left round to the bend in the Tugela east of Colenso, threw pontoons over the river, and carried the bulk of his force to the north bank, thus turning Botha's left completely, and menacing the Krugersdorpers' hold on Pieter's Hill. It was a tactical movement, and the only one left for him to adopt after repeated and unsuccessful attempts at frontal attacks and showy demonstrations with bayonets had only cost him soldiers' lives and continued defeats in his many attempts to reach Ladysmith. Buller had at last inserted the key in the lock which was to open the door to White and his imprisoned army.

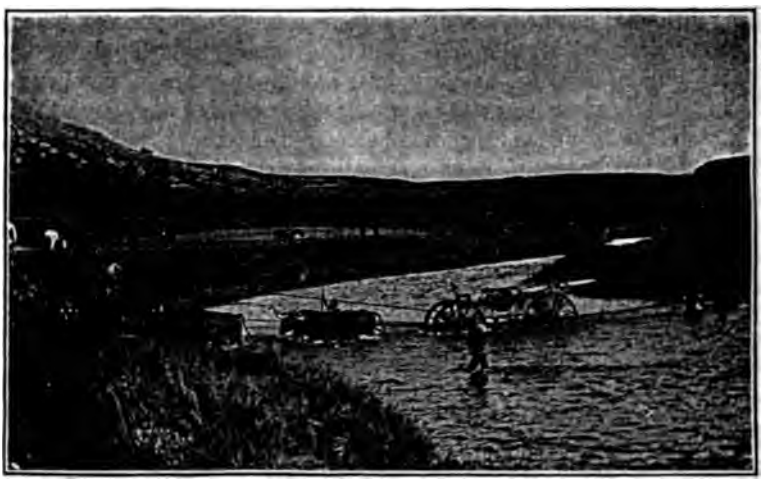
On Tuesday, the 27th of February, General Cronje surrendered to Lord Roberts at Paardeberg with his army of 4,000 burghers.

On the following day Lord Dundonald with a cavalry force rode north from General Buller's lines below Nelthorpe, swept past General Botha's left, and raised the siege of Ladysmith.

The Krugersdorp men still held on to Pieter's Hill; the Middelburg, Ermelo, and Zoutpansberg burghers were yet in position on what was the right of Botha's lines on the 23rd. On the 27th both these positions were fiercely attacked by overwhelming and fresh forces of the enemy. All the British guns had again been brought to bear upon the ridges, where the Boers still held on tenaciously, while the troops who had been thrown across the river and had turned Botha's left took the Krugersdorpers' position in flank, and finally forced them from the hill. During the renewed attack on this position by the English, a body of forty of the Johannesburg brigade, under Du Preez, were sent from the right to relieve the Krugersdorp men, who were engaged with twenty times their number. The Rand men, in rounding a kopje to reach the north of Pieter's Hill, found themselves surrounded by the enemy, and were forced to surrender. The burghers on the hill were compelled to evacuate it, but they had again rendered a good account of themselves before yielding their position, as seen in the numbers of British lying around where their few foemen had so stubbornly maintained their ground.

It was now, however, a matter of a rear-guard action, as the disastrous news from the Free State had produced its effect on many of the burghers, who had already retired towards the Biggarsberg. The men who had fought for twelve or fourteen days almost continuously had now to face round and keep the pursuing foe at a distance, to save the guns and to secure the way of retreat past

Ladysmith. Botha was everywhere, front, rear, and flank, encouraging his worn-out burghers, looking cheery and confident as usual, trying to inspirit the men, and ever ready with rifles and artillery to turn round and teach the British behind that the men who were retiring were those of Colenso and Spion Kop. He extricated his little force out of its perilous situation with superb coolness and complete success; developing new powers of successful generalship in facing his pursuers again and again, so that General Buller was slow to allow his big legions to follow too soon in the wake of so daring and desperate a foe. Thus every gun and ammunition



THE BOER "LONG TOM" IN RETREAT FROM LADYSMITH

wagon belonging to the army of the Tugela was withdrawn, and taken with safety past Ladysmith to the Biggarsberg hills.

It was on the night of the 1st of March that a few weary, drenched men rode along in the rain on horses scarcely able to carry their riders, with the evil-omened town to their left, the siege of which had been the ill-starred enterprise of the whole Federal campaign. Wagons, carts, men, guns had gone before, in the rear of Joubert's retreat on Glencoe. These few horsemen were Generals Botha and Meyer, with their adjutants, bringing up the last men of the force. The men were utterly exhausted after fully fourteen days of ceaseless fighting, in which many of the bravest burghers had fallen. They were rounding a hill east of Ladysmith, on their way to Modderspruit, when sounds of pursuing cavalry were heard from the direction of the town. Suddenly, however, a small body of men were seen to emerge from beneath the shadow of Lombard's

Kop, to spread themselves out right and left of the road over which the rear of the retreating column had passed, and open fire upon the advancing English. They were but seventy men who had thus thrown themselves across what can well be imagined to have been the vengeful resolve of some of General White's garrison, sallying forth to make reprisal for their long and humiliating captivity in the fever-stricken town. The cavalry force, thus foiled, wheeled round, and returned to Ladysmith. Botha, who had been a witness of the little fight, awaited the arrival of the officer in command of the body which had thus given him such timely support, and hailed him as he drew near: "Hello, Blake, is that you? That was well done: I am thankful to your men for their action." These men of Blake's Brigade had been the special guard of "Long Tom" during most of the siege, and had secured his removal from Lombard's Kop on that very evening when chance also gave them the opportunity of serving, and perhaps also saving, the one man in whom the hopes of Boer nationality were most centered after his brilliant exploits in the Tugela campaign.

President Kruger came from Pretoria to Glencoe to encourage the burghers to persevere in the fight against the enemy; the Government having already issued a proclamation to the Republic relating to General Cronje's surrender, from which I give the following extract:

"Notwithstanding that various rumors were afloat concerning Assistant-General Cronje and his men, and, altho the Government received no further official information with respect to this matter, the Government understands that the surrender must be accepted as a fact.

"However disappointing this may be, the Government is assured that this incident will not discourage our fighting forces in the defense of our independent national existence.

"The conflict as waged up to this point has abundantly testified that both Republics have been able to justify their existence as a self-subsisting nation, and this reverse will by no means cause us to waver in the struggle for our cherished rights.

"We believe that, whatever may occur, the Lord our God will continue to govern.

"In consequence of the invasion of the Free State by the enemy's main forces, and owing to other circumstances, it was necessary to take up other positions. This principally occurred in Natal. We withdrew to the Biggarsberg, and all our commandoes have arrived there safely."

Chapter XXX

PAARDEBERG

CRONJE'S OVERWEENING SENSE OF SECURITY—ROBERTS DECEIVES HIM BY FEINT AT KOEDESBERG WHILE FRENCH DASHES FOR KIMBERLEY—DE WET CAPTURES BRITISH CONVOY—CRONJE SURROUNDED—ESCAPES THROUGH BRITISH LINES—FRENCH WINS IN RACE WITH DE WET FOR KOEDESRAND DRIFT—CRONJE CAUGHT AT PAARDEBERG—STUBBORNLY VETOES PLAN OF FERREIRA—REPULSES ATTACK OF KITCHENER—DE WET'S COUNTER ATTACK—BRITISH COMMANDEER BOER HOSPITAL SERVICE—ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF CHIEF COMMANDANT FERREIRA—DE WET SUCCEEDS HIM—ESCAPES FROM CORDON—BOMBARDMENT OF CRONJE'S LAAGER—EXPLOIT OF THERON—CRONJE CALLS KRIEGSRAAD—IT VOTES TO GIVE UP THE FIGHT—CRONJE SURRENDERS—ROLL OF SURRENDERED FORCES AND OFFICERS.

GENERAL CRONJE remained virtually inactive for over six weeks following the victory of Magersfontein. He strengthened his positions, elaborated trenches, and took all possible precautions against any repetition of the surprise which failed through his vigilance in December, and then waited for Methuen to move. While waiting for Methuen he forgot Roberts and England's resources.

Villebois-Mareuil records his high praise of Cronje's laagers, trenches, and protected positions, but bears testimony to the overweening sense of false security which concerned itself, almost entirely, with the problematical action of an opponent manifestly held under restraint by the new Commander-in-Chief. Visions of another attack like that led by General Wauchope, and of an even greater defeat of the enemy than on that occasion, occupied Cronje's mind, and obscured a consideration of the obvious fact that other roads led to Kimberley as well as the one by which Methuen had failed to reach that city. There were numerous petty encounters, small fights between patrols, reconnaissances, and various excursions and alarms provided for the Federals by Methuen's tactics, or orders; but there was no opportunity offered for another pitched battle. The next encounter was to be Lord Roberts' show, and Methuen was not to be in it.

Changes had been made in the command of the Free State forces in the west which are interesting to consider now in the

light of their possible effect upon the fortunes of the campaign which ended at Paardeberg. Wessels had resigned the Chief Commandantship, and Ignaas Ferreira, a very popular officer, was appointed his successor. Villebois-Mareuil strongly urged President Steyn to give the position to General De la Rey. This was not done. He was, instead, transferred from the western commandoes to take charge of the forces operating against French around Colesberg, while Christian De Wet replaced Prinsloo, and was co-operating with Cronje at the time when Roberts had prepared his plans for an advance against both Cronje and Bloemfontein.

The English Commander-in-Chief's scheme of operations was skilfully conceived, and ably executed. He succeeded in creating the impression, both in England and among the Boers, that he was to strengthen the British army at the Modder River, and from thence to attack Cronje and cut his way, westward of Scholtznek, to Kimberley. He accordingly ordered General Macdonald to attack the Boer right with the Highland Brigade, in the early days of February, but not to press the fight beyond what might follow from a reconnaissance in force. This was done at Koedesberg on the 7th of February; the Highlanders falling back after the engagement to Methuen's encampment. This tactical action left a conviction in the Boer mind that the English had been engaged in a movement to discover the strength of the Federal right wing, and the difficulties of the ground at and around Koedesberg for an advance in that direction by the whole of Methuen's reenforced army under Roberts' supreme command.

Under cover of this impression Roberts withdrew General French from Colesberg, massed a huge cavalry force between Methuen and the Orange River; where their real destination was not suspected; and, when the plans were complete, let England's best cavalry officer go with his 5,000 horsemen and 30 guns, in a dash for Kimberley. It was the first evidence of real common-sense generalship on the English side during the war.

Nothing could well have been more careless than the scouting for Cronje's little army during the seven days following the fight with Macdonald up to the eve of French's advance. News had reached the Federal lines that suspicious movements were going on south of Methuen's encampment, but Cronje would not believe there was anything serious to be expected except by the way of Koedesberg. Roberts had, in fact, secretly withdrawn a great portion of the Modder River army southward to Belmont, for the purposes of his big plan of action; leaving Methuen with the remainder to carry on the tactical deception.

The position in which the Federal generals found themselves

when their left was turned by French and Kelly-Kenny was this: Cronje's lines extended for a distance of about twenty-five miles west to east, facing the Riet and Modder rivers; Magersfontein being midway between the two extremes. His headquarters were near Rondavels Drift, on the Modder River, at his extreme left. About a dozen miles east of this the road from Jacobsdal to Kimberley passes over the river at Klip Drift. Some ten miles, still east, another drift takes a road from Jacobsdal to Boshof over the same river, while east of a flat-topped hill, called Paardeberg, rising from the south bank of the Modder, another drift is situated through which a road, branching north from one between Bloemfontein and Jacobsdal, goes from Petrusburg to Koedesrand; this latter "rand" or ridge being north of the river, and commanding the passage of this last drift. The distance from this last drift to Cronje's headquarters, westward on the same river, would be about thirty-five miles.

North of Cronje's lines, behind Magersfontein, Generals Ferreira, Kolbe, and Du Toit were in command of the burghers investing Kimberley. A "Long Tom" which had been erected only a fortnight previously under the direction of Sam Leon and Villebois-Mareuil was at Kampersdam, near the waterworks which supplied the Diamond City.

By a singular coincidence Christian De Wet was at Jacobsdal, about twenty miles due south of Cronje's head laager, on February the 11th, and moved south towards Waterfall Drift, on the Riet River, that night with 500 men; almost at the very time that General French commenced his dash north for Kimberley with his 5,000 horsemen, by the way of the very same drift. De Wet's unerring military instinct took him on this reconnaissance without any definite knowledge of Roberts' design, and without orders from Cronje. He had heard of suspicious movements on the Free State border, west of Koffyfontein, and set out for that place. He reached the drift a few hours only before a patrol ahead of French's flying column arrived on the south side of the river. On the English general learning that the drift was defended he swung to the right to another drift, a few miles eastward, leaving some troops at Waterfall Drift to contain the opposing Boer force, while the main body of the column should cross over the more eastern passage. French took his whole column over here without opposition, and sending patrols ahead to guard against possible attacks on his left flank when passing Jacobsdal, he directed his course towards Klip Drift.

Christian De Wet held the Waterfall Drift on the Riet River successfully, and the detaining body of troops left behind by French

retired eastward, after learning of the successful passage of the river by the flying column, and went north in its wake. De Wet understood clearly now what the enemy's movement was, and all which it meant to the Federal forces, and not possessing men enough to attack Roberts' flank on his march to Klip Drift, he resolved to wait and watch for the convoy which was bound to be somewhere in the rear of a huge army moving over a section of a country which could not be reached by railways, for commissariat purposes. He soon saw the English main column, division after division, on its way towards Jacobsdal, and, biding his time, he swooped down upon the huge convoy of near 200 wagons and 1,800 cattle as the long straggling train was split in two by crossing the Riet River, near Blaubank. He shot the draft oxen, and brought the whole string of vehicles and carts to a standstill. Troops were sent back from the rear of the English divisions to extricate the convoy from its situation, but De Wet had also been reenforced by Andries Cronje, of Potchefstroom, and 200 men with a pom-pom; Cronje having come up from Koffyfontein, and passed in between the tail of French's column and the head of Roberts' force. The 700 Boers under De Wet took positions on some kopjes at Blaubank, and the convoy was therefore at their mercy. After an engagement in which some fifty of the English were killed and wounded, the enemy retired, leaving nearly half a million pounds worth of provisions, ammunition, and necessaries in the hands of De Wet's small commando. He appropriated what could be taken away, and left the remainder to the farmers in the locality. He then wheeled round, and followed in the rear of the British forces to Jacobsdal, drove the small English garrison out of the town which had occupied it the day before, and, believing that Cronje would try and get possession of the drifts eastward on the Modder on finding his left wing turned, he rode as rapidly as tired horses would allow across country towards Paardebreg in the hope of forming a junction with the Magersfontein army south of the river at that plaee, or north of it, with Ferreira and the burghers from Kimberley.

Cronje had been informed on Monday the 12th of February, that the enemy was in commotion south of Methuen's camp. It was rumor of this news which took De Wet south to Waterfall Drift. Cronje refused to believe in any serious movement of the English otherwise than westward of or along the railway line going to Kimberley. His right wing had been engaged with General Macdonald, and was this not evidence that the advance of Roberts was to be against his western positions? On Tuesday Commandant Froneman went to Klip Drift with about fifty men,

but the general made no move. On Wednesday despatch riders dashed into the head laager with the news that the enemy had seized the two drifts to the east, and that other troops were coming up. "They will be in our possession to-morrow," was the general's reply and comment, and not a move was made. On Thursday, however, when the reality of the situation was forced upon him by the information that a huge cavalry force had swept northwest to Kimberley, while other forces had come up from Jacobsdal and held Klip Drift right between him and Bloemfontein, he began to realize the peril in which he was placed, with his left turned by French, Methuen still in front of his center, and Lord Roberts advancing to throw himself between the Federal forces and the Free State capital.

These two days' fatal delay, and that unfortunate delusion which considered the English movement on his left as the feint and that on his right as the actual intention of the enemy were to cost the two Republics their independence—for a time.

On the evening of Thursday, the 15th of February, with all this deadly menace around his position present to his mind, the old general was found calmly smoking and superintending the greasing of his wagon preparing for the momentous trek through the enemy's lines. He had called in his right wing during the day, limbered up his guns, disposed of a number of his wagons and of needless baggage, and made all ready for a retreat eastward during the night.

At nine o'clock that night the head of the commandoes moved northeast, and passed within three miles of General Kelly-Kenny's headquarters. The extreme right of the Magersfontein army did not reach the place where the head of the column started from until after midnight. The long, straggling line of burghers, wagons, cattle, guns, etc., traveling necessarily at the slow pace of the oxen, must have taken fully five hours to crawl through the gap unaccountably left open for its passage by the English. It was not until about three in the morning of Friday that the rear of the serpentine column was observed and attacked. This rear-guard formed laager at once, sending the cattle and baggage ahead, and from within a square formed by their wagons, in the good old fighting style, not alone held back the attacks of Kitchener's Horse and other mounted troops, but kept the enemy resolutely at bay with considerable loss for hours until the commandoes ahead had time to secure position. Major Albrecht was with the rear-guard, and his single pom-pom played havoc with the horses of the attacking cavalry. Night coming on, the burghers inspanned, and followed after the main column along the river to Paardeberg Drift.

During this Friday three men whose names will occupy a foremost place in the annals of this war were rushing for the hill of Koedesrand, and the drift over the Modder which the hill commands: Cronje, De Wet, and French, and it was the latter who won. After finding that Cronje had passed through Kelly-Kenny's lines French must have been wired to by Kitchener to race from Kimberley with his cavalry force for all they were worth so as to forestall the Federals in the possession of the hill and drift east of Paardeberg. Almost without rest for men or horses, after the long march from Ramdam, this most able officer rode out of Kimberley with a portion of his great column, and in a thirty miles' ride succeeded in reaching the goal of the ridge and drift as Christian De Wet, with his 700 or 800 exhausted horsemen, appeared on the south side of the river, to see the prize in the possession of his British rival.

Cronje, encumbered by baggage, women, and children, had taken the course along the river, and off-saddled on Friday night at Wolfe Spruit, midway between Paardeberg and the drift opposite Koedesrand. French passed him on the north early on Saturday morning, and blocked the way eastward, so that when the old general scanned the veldt ahead at sunrise on the 17th of February he saw the enemy's guns in position, and found himself caught between two divisions of Roberts' army. Cronje's rear-guard had reached Paardeberg on Friday night after the successful fight with some of Kelly-Kenny's cavalry. Commandant Froneman, with some Cape Colony Volunteers and Free Staters, finding that the general had gone ahead, crossed the river with 200 wagons at Paardeberg Drift, insisting that this was the right movement to take in view of the immense forces of the enemy behind, and of the straight line of march leading from there to Bloemfontein. They were right, and succeeded in joining hands with Christian De Wet the following morning on the south of where Cronje was now shut in between French in front, Kitchener, Kelly-Kenny, and Smith-Dorrien behind, and other forces available to block the way through the drift at Paardeberg. The day's delay in starting lost Cronje the position of Koedesrand, and the neglect to pass over the river at Paardeberg Drift closed the last avenue of safe escape for the army of Magersfontein.

Cronje's retreat from Magersfontein left Chief Commandant Ferreira and the forces round Kimberley in a position of peril, with Methuen to the south and French within the city. Ferreira acted with promptness and ability, and extricated his men and guns out of the danger with success. Generals Du Toit and Kolbe were ordered to retire north to Riverton; the former to remain at

that point and block the railway from Kimberley to Mafeking; Kolbe and his commando to march round by Boshof, and unite with Cronje, as was expected, at Koedesrand. Ferreira himself, with about 1,000 men, went through the gap between Kelly-Kenny's force and French's cavalry; following the latter for some miles in their race eastward for the possession of Koedesrand Drift and Hill, but remaining south of Boshof and north of Kelly-Kenny's and French's lines, where he was to try in vain to induce Cronje to attempt to join him, and where he met his tragic death on the morning after the defeat of Kitchener in his first attack on Cronje's laager.

On discovering that the enemy held the Koedesrand and the drift opposite, Cronje was compelled to turn back towards another part of the river bank, where the rear of his retreating army was found after its almost continuous fight during Friday's march. The reunited force of some 4,000 men, finding themselves completely surrounded, began to entrench themselves on both sides of the river, but mainly on the north bank; the bed of the stream, which was in shallow condition at the time, being also used for baggage, and the shelter of the women and children.

This work was begun only on Sunday, and had to be continued under a constant fire from the enemy's guns, firing from the northwest and northeast, supplemented by a cavalry attack in the afternoon, which was repulsed by the burghers despite the fatigue of the previous day's fight and arduous night's march. Major Albrecht had placed his few guns on the left of the hastily made entrenchments, and he gave such a good account of himself that the enemy paid heavily for the fruitless attempt to rush that part of the Boer lines.

On that Saturday, after the laager had beaten off two attacks upon its left flank, General Ferreira, who was behind the British lines, northwest of Paardeberg, with the burghers who had retreated from around Kimberley, sent a message to Cronje urging him to break through the English line in that direction before all their forces should come up from the south and west, and informing him that the enemy would be attacked from the northwest by Kolbe and himself at the same time; while two other forces east of Paardeberg, one under Commandant De Beer and one commanded by De Wet, would cooperate in a diverting movement. This was a thoroughly sound and practicable plan, but Cronje replied bluntly refusing to act as advised. The plan had the demerit of having been suggested by Chief Commandant Ignaas Ferreira. The victor of Magersfontein had beaten off two assaults of the British that day, and he resolved to hold his ground. Com-

mandant De Beer came in through the British lines late in the night of Saturday, and personally appealed to the general to act in conjunction with Ferreira and the other generals, assuring him that there were reenforcements coming from Bloemfontein under Philip Botha and De la Rey, which would sustain the carrying out of Ferreira's plan, and enable the combined commandoes north and east, with De Wet on the south, to put themselves between Roberts and Bloemfontein. He was told that Villebois-Mareuil also strongly advised this course, and that there was no time to be lost. "I was a general before you were born," was the reply of the fierce old warrior, "and I shall hold my ground against any number of English until stronger forces come up from the east!"

Early on Sunday morning Field Cornets Grobblaar and Douthaite came through the lines with a message from De Wet and Philip Botha that there were enough men to the east, south of the river, to sustain the sortie if Cronje would only leave his baggage, women, and children, sally forth, and fight his way through. The minor officers in the laager, who were made aware of these messages, joined in backing up this suggestion, but were turned upon and told: "Are you afraid of the English? If you are, you may go!" Nothing would move him from his resolution to stay where he was.

He had intended moving his right eastward, to a deeper place on the bank, at Makous Drift, but he learned early on that Sunday that the spot had been occupied in an advance westward during the previous night by the enemy. That morning he heard guns directly south, and it was rumored in the laager that De Wet had cut his way through from Petrusburg, and was hastening to their relief. A dust-covered column was seen rapidly advancing from that direction, and they were allowed to take up position southwest of Paardeberg Hill, when, too late, they were discovered to be English. The circle of foes was now complete. The victors of Magersfontein were enclosed on all sides by a force of fully 40,000 men and 100 guns.

Cronje's courage and determination never wavered. He addressed the burghers at a religious service early that Sunday morning, and urged them to fight resolutely, that God was on their side, and that a relieving force from Bloemfontein would be sure to attack the English in the east, and clear a way out for the entire laager. He then sent men across the river to entrench the south bank, and awaited the attack which was coming. Down in the river bed, and in a hollow or donga to his right, the women, children, and transport were placed, while shelters were being dug in the banks of the river which were to offer better protection than the trenches

on the top when the enemy's guns came into action. Nothing that could be done to enable the small force to defend itself was left undone by the indomitable old Boer, on whose fight against odds and fortune combined the whole civilized world was gazing in astonished admiration.

It was on the afternoon of this Sunday (February 18) that Kitchener's famous attack was ordered on what was believed by him to be a force and a position that could not possibly stand before such an absolutely overwhelming body of troops as he commanded. The enemy were conscious of being the masters of Cronje's doom, and it was resolved to lend a dramatic spirit of vengeance to the expected defeat and capture by employing the Highland regiments in the delivery of the main attack, in retaliation for the terrible punishment inflicted upon them at Magersfontein. It was not a spirit worthy of a true soldier, and resembled more that of a hunter who, failing to bring down a lion in his path, succeeds in driving him into a cage, and then takes an unworthy sportsman's pleasure in potting his imprisoned adversary from the vantage ground of safety. It deserved to fail, and did.

After fully fifty guns from all sides had shelled the laager for hours, in such an incessant storm of lyddite and shrapnel as no modern battle-field has ever witnessed, the Highlanders and other regiments were let loose like bloodhounds from the leash upon the cornered quarry from the north, west, east, and south. On they came with bayonets glinting in the sun, in all the confidence of vast numbers and inspired by the belief that it would be a short rush, and then an Elandslaagte of British revenge. But the men in the trenches, tho only a handful in comparison with Kitchener's legions, were not to lend themselves to pig-sticking on that Sunday, so easily as the Kitcheners and Kelly-Kennys believed. The old lion was caged, but he could strike through his bars, and the sun went down that Sabbath day, the 18th of February, after witnessing one of the most unequal battles ever fought; the Highlanders, balked of their vengeance, beaten again, and again demoralized, and the other regiments driven back with almost equal loss, with the enemy magnificently repulsed all along the line. The grim old lion of Potchefstroom had once again made a South African battle-field run red with the blood of his country's malignant foe. He had sustained the record even of Magersfontein, for his 4,500 Boers had faced, fought, and repulsed on that Sunday seven times their number of English assailants, having twenty guns to the Boers' one.

During the progress of the main battle on the 18th, De Wet

had made a furious onslaught upon the troops who had been sent south of the river to carry out Kitchener's plan of an all-round rush upon Cronje. He thus diverted a great deal of the enemy's attention from the laager to himself, and had in the end to sustain a counter attack of a dozen guns upon his position and several attempts by infantry forces to dislodge him. He held his ground until night time, and was thus largely instrumental in helping Cronje successfully to resist Kitchener's movement to crush him by sheer weight of numbers and guns.

The Boers had lost very few in this battle, but a relatively large number had been wounded. For these there were no doctors or ambulance attendance. They were lying in the bed of the river or in the dongas, and this spectacle, with women and children close by, naturally tended to demoralize some of the burghers. Cronje asked Kitchener on Monday morning for an armistice to bury the dead, and to send his wounded to the Boer ambulance at Petrusburg. Joubert had accorded an even more accommodating armistice to General White after Modderspruit. It is believed that Kitchener was inclined to accede to these requests, but that Lord Roberts, who had now arrived on the scene, would not consent to either. This, however, was not the worst side of the English general's actions. His forces had arrested the whole of the Hollander ambulance at Jacobsdal, and had refused to allow the doctors serving under the Red Cross ensign to pass through the lines to the Boer laager; the British actually using the Federal hospitals and ambulance appliances at Jacobsdal for their own wounded, while denying to their foemen the services of their own medical assistants and nurses! It is true that Lord Roberts offered to take Cronje's wounded over to his own lines for treatment by the English doctors, but no self-respecting foe could consent to this in face of such conduct as that at Jacobsdal, and while he still had a resolve to continue the combat. So the fight went on all Monday; Roberts, however, keeping his troops at a respectful distance from the range of the rifles which had driven back Kitchener's legions the previous day. The enemy turned all his batteries upon the laager by the river, and awaited the double agency of an artillery fire which could not be answered by the Boer guns, and of the horrible conditions under which Cronje had to hold his ground, to effect what frontal attacks and revengeful charges had failed disastrously to achieve.

Early on Monday morning, while General Ferreira was making the rounds of his position outside the enemy's lines, north of Koedesrand, he found one of his sentinels asleep at his post. He prodded him with the butt of his Mauser to rouse him, when the

burgher, startled from his slumber, and prompted by the thought that he was attacked by the enemy, seized the general's gun at the breach, when the weapon went off, killing the Commandant-General; the bullet passing through his heart as he was leaning over the frightened burgher. Ferreira was one of the best of men, loved by all who knew him, and his brief head commandantship of the western Free State forces in succession to General Wessels, who had resigned, was very popular with all the burghers. His tragic death was a severe blow to the already sorely-tried defenders of Cronje's laager. General Christian De Wet was immediately appointed Chief Commandant of the Free State army, in succession to Ferreira.

On Tuesday Major Albrecht's five guns were rendered useless by the breakdown of the artillery service and the want of ammunition. All the enemy's guns being beyond the range of rifle fire, and there being no further danger from Cronje's single battery, Lord Roberts saw that his opponent's situation was rendered quite hopeless, and he began to push his lines a little nearer.

A message was heliographed to Cronje from Petrusburg on Tuesday afternoon by Commandant Froneman, saying that Christian De Wet and Philip Botha were near, had beaten a portion of the enemy's force, and were in possession of a strong position to the southeast of the laager. They were expecting De la Rey and reenforcements, and would be able to render effective help if the laager would hold out. This intelligence revived the drooping spirits of the men, who, on finding their positions attacked again that afternoon by infantry charges from the northwest, fusilladed the troops back in the best Magersfontein manner. This was virtually the last assault delivered by Roberts. His 100 unanswered guns, the shambles in the bed of the Modder River, and the unnerving presence of women and children within an area where every shell that exploded compelled every one to seek shelter, would do what bayonet charges could not effect.

All this time De Wet was hanging on to the flank of the enemy southeast of the river. He had gained a small kopje, from which a Krupp and a pom-pom enabled him to harass the English on both sides of the river considerably. A huge force was therefore directed against him on Wednesday, with the object of surrounding the hill, and capturing guns and men. Firing his two pieces up to the last moment, he called in his men, some 1,200 strong, sent out two lines of screening horsemen to the right and left, and then, forming his force into a wedge-like column with the guns in between, shot clean through the opening still left between the horns of the closing English circle. Andries Cronje, of Potchefstroom, with

only 50 men, riding, firing, and retiring, as sharp-shooters, held back the enemy's horsemen until De Wet and his guns were safe at Poplars Grove.

The following night the same force of burghers, led by their general, rode back again under cover of darkness, lay in wait until dawn enabled them to see the enemy's location on the hill which had been vacated on the previous day, and in a spur-gallop over the intervening ground attempted to retake the kopje. But the troops in position were too strong, and De Wet, losing only a very few men, wheeled back and regained his former ground.

On Thursday the pitiless bombardment of Cronje recommenced with the dawn, and was maintained throughout the whole day. In the evening 100 men left the laager and crossed over to the British to surrender.

Alternate hope and depression came to the trenches during the 23rd. Froneman heliographed from the east to be of good cheer, and to hold out; that 3,000 burghers were about to attack the enemy to Cronje's left. No action followed the sending of the message, however, and a week's continuous combat in one of the most trying and desperate fights ever fought ended with more deaths, wounds, and desertions, as the night of Friday shut out the two forces from each other's view. But the nights did not stop the fighting. The English pushed their trenches from the east nearer and nearer until the British rifles were able to supplement the fire of their batteries with Lee-Metfords against Mausers from shelters which were built under cover of darkness.

Saturday ushered in the fiercest storm of projectiles yet turned upon the unfortunate laager. General Cronje estimated the number of guns at work against him that day at twenty-five batteries, all driving their shells and stinking lyddite into an area of about a mile within which the lines of the small army were now contracted. Not a move could safely be made in the trenches or holes in which the men had to crouch for protection, yet whenever an attempt was made to rush the trenches the Mausers were there with the old death-dealing accuracy of fire. Dead men lay unburied, dead horses floated in the river, the wounded were uncared for, the water of the Modder was no longer drinkable; and it seemed as if no other trials could possibly be added to the sum of indescribable misery under which these few men still faced the fate of inevitable defeat rather than hoist the white flag. This Saturday evening Captain Daanie Theron reached the laager after having passed through the English lines, swimming the river in his journey. He had gone on hands and knees for two miles after leaving his horse, so as to evade the patrols of the enemy before reaching

the river's bank, being frequently within a few yards of British sentinels on his perilous mission. He brought messages from De Wet, Froneman, Botha, and Commandant Cronje, of Potchefstroom, in combined command of 4,000 or 5,000 men to the east, begging of General Cronje to attempt to cut his way through in that direction before all was lost. They pointed out that the enemy was commencing to feel the strain of the day and night fighting since the 14th, that their rations were not what would sustain the troops in a combative spirit, and that a dash through the line beyond which De Wet's forces were ready for a responsive attack would stand a good chance of succeeding.

Early the following morning a British patrol south of General French's lines were startled at seeing a nude figure riding like the wind on a dark horse, as if he were the spirit of a soldier on some mission from the dead within the doomed laager. They were too frightened to fire, and Theron thus got safe away after swimming the river on his return journey to De Wet's camp.

Cronje now assented to the proposal which he had hitherto refused to entertain, and the burghers began to build a chain bridge over the swollen river—a rain-storm having helped the British shell-storm to drive the Boers from the shelter of the bed of the Modder—and a sortie to the southeast was to be attempted on Monday night. But fate had determined that the blunders of the previous week should entail their penalty. Some Kaffirs, who had attended to the horses and cattle, deserted to the British on Sunday morning while the Boers were engaged at prayers in the most protected part of the laager. The officers who had been in favor of the sortie all the previous week now seemed inclined to consider the whole situation absolutely hopeless, and to whisper the word "surrender." A prayer supplication to the Almighty was suggested in order to find inspiration as to which course was best, and this was supplemented by an impassioned appeal from the general to the burghers to fight on, and trust in God and in the efforts of their friends. On Sunday night the drooping spirits of the laager had been raised again, and all were ready to stake their last hope on the attempt which was to be made on the following night.

Monday morning, however, dashed this hope to the ground. The Kaffirs had informed the British of the work going on at the point in the river where the chain bridge was being made, and all the enemy's guns were turned upon this spot, making it impossible to carry on the task. Two shells aimed at this place fell among a group of burghers and literally blew the son of Commandant Andries Cronje to pieces, killing eight or ten

more at the same time. This, together with the destruction of the chain bridge, deadened the spirit of further resistance in banishing the hope of any successful help from outside, and the burghers clamored to Cronje to hoist the white flag. His men had, at last, lost faith in his power to beat back the English, and he had to consent to the calling of a kriegsraad to decide the question of surrender. As a last resort he heliographed in the direction of Aasvogel Kop, where Theron had told him De Wet and Botha were waiting to help him, that it had been decided at a council of war to surrender on Tuesday if the outside assistance could not cut its way through. No answer came back. The council had voted for surrender, all excepting the general and Commandant Roos. Fate was doubly unkind to Cronje in making him lower the hitherto triumphant Boer flag on the 27th of February, Majuba Day! But so it had occurred.

The morning was beautifully fine, the sun rising bright and clear over the fearful scene which met the gaze of the old hero of Potchefstroom, whose own sun of military renown had set in a halo of glory which a whole world was to salute in boundless admiration for an unparalleled resistance. The white flag was hoisted over the general's tent, and Cronje and his secretary rode over to Lord Roberts and his staff, and gave up the fight.

The total loss of the Federals in all the engagements from Klip Drift to Paardeberg, amounted to no more than 97 killed and 245 wounded.

On Sunday, February 18, when Kitchener ordered his attack by four divisions on as many sides of a position which had been taken up after a thirty miles' march, and put in a state of defense in one night's work, these 4,500 farmers shot down over 1,000 of their enemy, and drove the other assailants back behind their artillery. In the ten days' fighting the British casualties were at least 1,500 men.

This victory of Lord Roberts sent the British Empire into a delirium of exultation. Majuba had at last been avenged. Britain's military might had again asserted itself. But the world, which knew of the disproportion in men and means between the victors and the vanquished, saw no triumph in a battle fought for ten days by 5,000 farmers and five guns against 40,000 trained soldiers and 25 batteries of artillery. And, at last, the English press was compelled to tell the truth about the strength of "the army of 16,000 Boers and of batteries of Long Toms" which had defeated Methuen at Magersfontein. Lord Roberts could count only the men and guns found in the alleged army "of 16,000."

The guns captured were: three 7.5 c.m. Krupps; one (old pat-

tern) 12-pounder q.f. Krupp, and one 3.7 c.m. Vickers-Maxim (pom-pom)—5 guns.

The men who surrendered numbered 3,919. Adding to these the number killed (97) and wounded (245) in the fighting up to the time of surrender, Cronje's total force on taking up position at Paardeberg was 4,261 men.

He had, however, according to my information, a body of some 500 Cape Colony Volunteers, who were part of the force with which he had beaten Methuen on December 11. There is no account of these in the details, Boer or British, of the men who laid down their arms to Lord Roberts on the 27th of February. They crossed the Modder, to the south, on Saturday night, the 17th, after the rear-guard action with some of Kelly-Kenny's division, and made their way towards Bloemfontein, where they joined De Wet and Philip Botha. Some 200 Free Staters had also left the column on its retreat after passing Klip Drift. They went north towards Boshof, and joined General Ferreira's men on their retreat from the Kimberley investment. Had Cronje taken either of these courses, on finding that French had passed him towards Kimberley, and that Kelly-Kenny and Kitchener were coming up to Klip Drift, he could have easily escaped destruction. If he had followed the burghers who crossed at Paardeberg Drift, and formed a junction with De Wet, Philip Botha, Froneman, and De la Rey, he would soon have had 10,000 men with whom to fight Roberts for the possession of Bloemfontein, and any one who knew of the utterly demoralized plight in which the British army staggered into the Free State capital after its month's marching, fighting, and starving, will not hesitate to say that three such capable generals as De la Rey, Cronje, and De Wet, with one-fourth of Roberts' strength, would have easily smashed him and his 40,000 half-famished troops.

A generous-minded world, lost in admiration at the example of heroic patriotism which was thought to have entirely died out of a materialistic age, overlooked faults of generalship which were redeemed by the virtues of dauntless courage. Tho pride and over-confidence had lost to Cronje opportunities which would otherwise have saved the cause of the two Republics from destruction, critics who are not English, but are fair and just, will say that, if ever error was atoned for in acts that thrill the hearts and fire the imaginations of mankind, the unsurpassed bravery of the "Lion of Potchefstroom" and his 4,000 farmers at the banks of the Modder River will deaden the recollection of the blunders which gave England the material, but the Boers the moral, triumph of Paardeberg.

The Federal officers who surrendered to Lord Roberts after their

brilliant resistance during the ten days' battle were: General Cronje, Commandant M. J. Wolmarans, Commandants Roos and J. L. Martins, Assistant Commandants R. Woest, J. P. G. Vorster, and W. L. Jooste; Field Cornets Albert Naude, J. H. L. Bosman, W. A. Lemmer, H. G. Badenhorst, Frills (Scandinavian), D. H. Hattingh, Venter, D. J. Terblanche, P. V. de Villiers, G. J. du Plessis, Assistant Field Cornet P. W. Snyman, War Commissioner Arnoldi, Assistants P. J. Jooste, and A. K. Esselen, Adjutants J. T. A. Wolmarans, A. D. W. Wolmarans, R. A. Ning, G. S. Maree, J. B. Botha, G. H. Grobler, Bomas, and Moodie; Commandants J. P. J. Jordaan, J. K. Kok, J. C. Villiers, R. J. Snyman, L. Meintjes, J. Greyling; Field Cornets J. Cronje, C. Oosthuizen, C. van Zyl, J. Nieuwenha, N. K. Hick, J. N. van der Walt; Major Albrecht, Commander of the Artillery; Lieutenants V. Heester, Vondewitz, and Van Angesten.

Chapter XXXI

AFTER PAARDEBERG

PRESIDENT KRUGER ARRIVES AT BLOEMFONTEIN—WITH PRESIDENT STEYN VIEWS FIGHT AT POPLARS GROVE—RETREAT OF BOERS—GENERAL DESERTION OF BURGHERS—BATTLE OF ABRAM'S KRAAL—FALL OF BLOEMFONTEIN—BRITISH ANNEXATION OF FREE STATE—PRESIDENTS KRUGER AND STEYN APPEAL TO LORD SALISBURY FOR PEACE—SALISBURY'S REPLY—SECRETARY REITZ'S REJOINDER—BOER CASUALTIES UP TO PAARDEBERG—ROBERTS' ADVANCE TO PRETORIA—OBSTACLES IN HIS WAY—CONCENTRATION OF BOER TROOPS IMPOSSIBLE—DE WET'S PLAN OF GUERRILLA WARFARE.

PRESIDENT KRUGER came from Pretoria to Bloemfontein to encourage the Federals after the defeat and surrender of Cronje. General De la Rey had hastened up from Colesberg with all the burghers he could muster, which comprised a few squadrons of the Johannesburg and Pretoria Police, some of the Rand commandoes, and the remnants of other scattered corps and bodies. The Ficksburg, Ladybrand, and Winburg burghers were with De Wet and Philip Botha. The third Free State army, which had been operating across the Orange River, was, at the time, retreating north to Kroonstad under Generals Ollivier, Lemmer and Grobler. This force was between 5,000 and 6,000 strong, and was largely composed of Cape Volunteers. It was moving so slowly with a train of 500 or 600 wagons that it did not reach its destination until some weeks after the fall of Bloemfontein.

Lord Roberts had been reenforced from Methuen's army, and from the eternal arrivals from England and elsewhere; so that it became virtually an advance of 50,000 troops against 5,000 burghers. The Federals fell back to Poplars Grove, a dozen miles eastward of Paardeberg, where they were attacked by Roberts on the 7th of March. Presidents Kruger and Steyn were spectators of the encounter, and were gone from a place at which they had witnessed the fight only ten minutes when the enemy was in occupation of the spot. Roberts succeeded in turning the Federal position at the Modder River by sending a strong cavalry force across lower down the stream, and in this way compelled De Wet to fall back again eastward. In moving his position a strong force of Roberts' cavalry all but surrounded the escort of the Boer guns, quite

brilliant resistance during the te
Cronje, Commandant M. J. Wolma
J. L. Martins, Assistant Commanda
and W. L. Jooste; Field Cornets All
W. A. Lemmer, H. G. Badenhorst
H. Hattingh, Venter, D. J. Terblan
du Plessis, Assistant Field Cornet
missioner Arnoldi, Assistants P. J.
Adjutants J. T. A. Wolmarans, A. D.
G. S. Maree, J. B. Botha, G. H. Gr
Commandants J. P. J. Jordaan, J. K
Snyman, L. Meintjes, J. Greyling; P
Oosthuizen, C. van Zyl, J. Nieuwenha
Walt; Major Albrecht, Commander of
V. Heester, Vondewitz, and Van Angest

near to where the two Presidents had been in consultation with the Federal generals. De Wet's men fought superbly, contesting the ground with the enemy's mounted troops in the finest manner possible. General Philip Botha and 100 men threw themselves between the guns and the British, and held the Lancers back with consummate courage and shooting capacity until the artillery and the Presidents were at a safe distance.

In the retreat from Poplars Grove the mass of the burghers understood that it had been determined to make no further stand west of Bloemfontein, and that the campaign for the defense of the capital was ended. This impression was by no means an unreasonable one after the events of the previous fortnight. The crushing blow of Cronje's surrender, followed immediately as it was by the relief of Ladysmith and the retreat of Joubert, had broken the long and extraordinary spell of Boer success which had been piously attributed to the protecting care exercised by Providence over the cause of the Republics. Then came the appeal for peace on the part of the Presidents, which encouraged a delusion that there was to be, at least, a truce that would enable burghers to visit homes from which they had been absent in most instances since the war began in October. Owing to the wide prevalence of this state of feeling large numbers of burghers went straight to their homes in the retreat toward Abram's Kraal. President Steyn, De Wet, and Philip Botha did their utmost by entreaty and persuasion to induce them to stand, but it was well known that it had already been decided not to risk any serious injury to the city in a hopeless effort to defend it, and the disheartened farmers whose homes were far away felt no inclination after six months' campaigning to repeat the fruitless performance of Poplars Grove. No authority can compel a burgher to fight against his will, and fully two-thirds of the men who were ready and eager to fight in the old form for the rescue of Cronje's laager, had he only consented to act as he had been entreated to do, trekked homeward, and left the Free State capital to its fate.

The hill at Abram's Kraal, therefore, had to be occupied by De la Rey and Celliers, whose united forces of police and Rand men at this position numbered no more than 300. Celliers had the name of being one of the most indomitable fighters of the Federal commandoes. In the campaign around Colesberg he had displayed a valor and an eagerness for surprise attacks with small forces upon superior numbers of the enemy that had earned for him the reputation of having a charmed life. Six times during the 9th of March the positions held by himself and De la Rey were attacked by huge forces hurled against them by Roberts. Men fell by the score out of

this intrepid band of Rand fighters, assailed on all sides, but the attacking columns were driven reeling back each time with ranks thinned and broken. It was to be the last fight for Bloemfontein, and, tho the burghers had no delusions as to being able to stop thirty times their number of foes after the disheartening event of the 27th of February, in no engagement during the whole campaign has there been a finer display of courage or a more stubborn resistance shown than by the Pretoria and Johannesburg Police and by Celliers' Fordsburg and Jeppstown burghers at Abram's Kraal. In one of these attacks upon De la Rey the English advanced within fifty yards of his men, but were forced back by the unflinching valor of the heroic policemen. So sustained and effective was the fire which Celliers' men directed upon a battery which was attacking De la Rey's position, that the guns were abandoned for a time in the middle of the battle-field with all their service shot down around them. In face of Roberts' whole force Celliers was ready to rush out and take them, only he had neither oxen nor horses with which to carry them away. From six in the morning until darkness came on the battle raged—from where De Wet and Philip Botha with only a few hundred burghers, tried to stop the progress of the resistless wave of numbers east of Petrusburg, to where De la Rey and Celliers, with that sturdy old campaigner Kolbe, were standing as it were across the road to Bloemfontein, fighting fully twenty to one in a battle of hopeless but dogged resistance. Ninety men of the immortal 300 Police and Rand men were killed at Abram's Kraal. Altogether, out of a force variously estimated at between 900 and 1,500 men, De la Rey, De Wet, and Celliers lost some 390 in killed and wounded in this battle with Roberts' huge army.

De la Rey fell back again slowly, De Wet and himself fighting and retiring, and compelling the English to keep at a cautious movement towards their objective; the Boer plan being not to make any final stand within the town, but to gain time in which to remove north to the hills above the river toward Brandfort such stores and ammunition as could be carried away. On the 13th of March Lord Roberts took possession of Bloemfontein, almost without opposition.

The fall of the Free State capital marked a strong turning of the tide against the Federal forces in the field, while cutting the Republics adrift from the lingering hope of European intervention. Lord Roberts annexed the Free State, by proclamation, to the British Empire without a protest from any Continental Power, and the two little Christian States were thus left at the mercy of the rapacious Empire whose statesmen had connived at

the Jameson Raid. The situation was, therefore, one well calculated to encourage despondency and despair in the Boer mind, and it was under the weight of this depression that more than half of the remaining Free State forces gave up the fight for a time and went to their farms.

Presidents Kruger and Steyn had already addressed a dignified appeal for peace to Lord Salisbury, on the 5th of March, pointing out the evils which the war had already occasioned on both sides, in loss of lives and in injury to property; reiterating their previous declarations, that the Republics took up arms solely to defend their liberties, and not with any aggressive intent or purpose against the British Empire in South Africa; and solemnly asseverating their earnest desire for peace. They, however, made it clear that, if England's policy in pursuing the war was to be one of conquest, there was nothing left for the allied Republics "but to continue in their present struggle to the end, in spite of the overwhelming might of the British Empire." Lord Salisbury's reply, as was fully expected, was the negation of the assurance which at the outbreak of hostilities he had publicly and purposely given to the Powers of Europe, that England in the conflict with the Transvaal sought neither gold mines nor the acquisition of territory, but only the full protection of British subjects. He had nothing better to base his refusal of the offers of peace upon than the Jingo legends of ambitious Boer coalitions against the Empire, "the accumulation for many years past of military stores on an enormous scale which could only have been intended for use against Great Britain," and the fallacy that it was the Republics, and not the British Empire, which began the war. Lord Salisbury ended his reply by declaring that the British Government "were not prepared to assent to the independence of either the South African Republic or the Orange Free State."

Lord Salisbury's reply elicited the following unanswerable rejoinder from State Secretary Reitz:

"Lord Salisbury asserts that at the time of the Ultimatum none of the rights guaranteed by the Convention had been broken, and that our declaration of war had been the first step towards hostilities.

"What is really the truth?

"As the Ultimatum expressed it, Her Majesty's Government had pressed and threatened to enforce changes in the internal Government of the Republics since the Bloemfontein Conference, altho, according to Conventions, such matters were exclusively within the control of our own Governments.

"Further, during these threatening negotiations British troops in

abnormal numbers were sent to South Africa and stationed upon our borders, and the High Commissioner assured President Steyn that these troops were not intended for the Free State, but alone for the South African Republic.

"Finally, the negotiations were suddenly broken off by Her Majesty's Government, with the threat that Her Majesty's Government would take its own steps to remove the grievances of her subjects.

"After that, we waited another fourteen days, while an Army Corps was mobilized in England and prepared for despatch to South Africa, and also the Reserves called out—both being measures of an indisputable belligerent tendency.

"After the inquiry of President Steyn as to the object of these threatening proceedings, the High Commissioner gave no reply, but Mr. Chamberlain, in his speeches in England, demonstrated clearly to the world that England had firmly resolved to bring about drastic changes at once.

"Upon this we addressed a communication to the British Government, falsely named an ultimatum, which was not a declaration of war, but simply declared that, unless Her Majesty's Government stopped the further despatch of troops to our borders, and would settle all points at dispute by means of impartial arbitration, this Republic would be obliged to view the action of the British Government as a hostile act and cause of war.

"The communication was, therefore, more of a peace message, and was not intended as a provocation for war from our side.

"Under these circumstances, what could we do other than that which we did? As Mr. Leonard Courtney, a British statesman, said: 'England acted like a man, who, in the middle of friendly negotiations with another person, and with whom he found it impossible to agree, suddenly said, "Wait a bit, until I have got my revolver, then I will continue to argue with you."'

"In connection with the statement of Lord Salisbury, that the Republics had secretly armed, and in a most amazing manner, I only wish to say that we purchased our weapons and ammunition in an open manner, without any secrecy, from English and European firms, and that we had a perfect right to do this, so that the High Commissioner at the Conference at Bloemfontein could boast that Her Majesty's Government was perfectly aware of our arming, and the British military authorities were enabled to issue a secret pamphlet to their officers (found by us in the camp at Dundee), in which full particulars of the state of our arms were set forth. The arming was only commenced after the Jameson Raid had taken place, and it had been made plain to us by means of intercepted telegrams, and the investigation by the House of Commons, that not alone highly placed British officials, but also members of the Government were behind the treacherous conspiracy.

"Before this time the British officer who was employed as a spy

(White) says, with a semblance of truth, that the arming of the population was such that the South African Republic could be taken with five thousand men without difficulty.

"From this it is evident that both our arming and our ultimatum were designed as defensive measures, in order to protect and preserve the independence of this Republic. The concluding declaration of Lord Salisbury, that Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to agree to the independence of the South African Republic or that of the Orange Free State, makes it evident to every burgher, of these Republics, and to the whole world, that Her Majesty's Government has in view nothing else than the total destruction of our independent national existence. Now that all doubt upon that point is removed, the burghers know why they fight, and they will proceed with the struggle for their national existence to the end, in the firm confidence (as both of our State Presidents have expressed it) 'that that God who has implanted in our hearts and in the hearts of our fathers, the unquenchable fire of love of liberty, will not forsake us, but will complete His work in us and in our posterity."

The casualties in the Federal forces from the outbreak of the war up to, but not including, the surrender of General Cronje's army were:

Killed	677
Wounded	2,129
Accidentally killed	24
Accidentally wounded	171
Died of sickness	99
Sick who had recovered or who were still under treatment	1,251
Total	4,351

These figures are given on the authority of Dr. Mollengraaff, chief of the Identity Department of the Red Cross Society of Pretoria. To them must be added the number of prisoners taken by the enemy at Elandslaagte and other engagements, and the total losses at Paardeberg. I estimate the number of prisoners up to Paardeberg to have been 350. Adding to these, and to the above figures the total recorded Boer casualties on the 27th of February—namely, 97 killed, 245 wounded, and 3,919 who surrendered—the grand total would be 8,962 men. That is, more than one-fourth of the total effective forces of the two Republics had been knocked out of the fight with the British Empire the day Cronje laid down his arms. Allowing for a return to the field of two-thirds of the wounded and of the sick, say 2,000 men, the burghers and volunteers remaining as available for the continuation

of the war at the time Christian De Wet began his movement from Brandfort, would number about 26,000. This number corresponded with the strength of the combined armies when the Republics took the field on the 12th of October, 1899; the losses in the five months of the war balancing the additions made to the commandoes within the same period. But whereas, while the enemy had only between 30,000 and 40,000 troops in South Africa

Photo by Mr. Davitt

OFFICERS OF GENERAL PHILIP BOTHA'S CAMP, OSSPRUIT, EASTER, 1900

George Brand (now Commandant) on extreme left, on white horse

the day Joubert crossed over Laing's Nek in the invasion of Natal, Lord Roberts was in supreme command of armies numbering more than 150,000 soldiers, with fully 300 guns, when Christian De Wet gazed down on the British camp at Bloemfontein from the hills above the Modder River, early in March, 1900.

The British advance from Bloemfontein to Pretoria was destined to be a great surprise to all who had counted upon Roberts having to meet the combined force of Transvaal and Free State resistance in a most determined form at the Vaal River. It was believed all round that when the Federals were compelled to draw in their scattered lines of observation and defense from the borders of the two

Republics, and concentrate the full strength of the allied States upon one great operation, results would follow which "would stagger humanity." But in war, as in many other affairs of men, it is the unexpected which frequently happens. The popular belief in Europe at the outbreak of the Franco-German conflict was that France would dictate her terms to Germany in Berlin within a few weeks' time. The same confidence obtained, in October, 1899, with reference to the English army, and an occupation of Pretoria by Christmas; and, once more, in the British invasion of the Transvaal after the surrender at Paardeberg, the expected was destined not to materialize into fact.

The explanation of this falling off in the resisting capacity of the Boers before the English advance between the two capitals is found in a rational view of the situation as revolutionized by the disaster of February 27. One kind of campaign had come to an end, and another was called for in the surrender of a Federal army and of the ablest fighting general on the Boer side. This surrender was determined by an overwhelming body striking at a point where Cronje's tactical weakness and the entanglement of the Kimberley investment created an opportunity for Lord Roberts of which he skilfully availed himself. Without a huge outflanking force of troops this movement could never have been carried through as it was. There can be no doubt whatever on that point. Then, had the Boer general's over-confidence in himself and unreasoning contempt for his foes not tied him down to his cherished positions at Magersfontein for two days longer than ordinary prudence should have counseled after French's turning movement, the inferior fighting qualities of Roberts' troops, as seen in the subsequent ten days' combat around Paardeberg, would have given Cronje, De la Rey, and De Wet, with a combined force of 10,000 burghers, the greatest victory ever gained over an English army. This conclusion is also warranted as an unhesitating deduction from the facts of the battles previously fought.

It was not possible, however, after the surrender of February 27, to effect any concentration at any point between the two capitals adequate to the task of keeping back 50,000 troops. Joubert's commandoes, comprising some 8,000 men, were held at the Biggarsberg by the British army in Natal under Buller, while fully 4,000 burghers had to be retained: between Fourteen Streams; continuing the farcical siege of Mafeking; guarding the northwest boundary line against the operations of the Rhodesian forces. British and Kaffir; and policing the Zulu and Swaziland borders. Grobler's and Ollivier's Colesberg commandoes, consisting of Free State burghers and rebels, were the strongest Federal unit remaining in

the Free State after Cronje's surrender. It was found impossible however, to obtain the immediate cooperation in the work of holding Roberts' legions back, of even half of the 5,000 who had carried out one of the most successful retreats in modern military history.

Like thousands of other burghers, mainly the elder and more responsible family men, they went to their farms, and the task of attempting to arrest the progress of the English from one Boer capital to the other was left solely to the available younger Boers, to the Cape Volunteers, and to the foreign brigades. All the facts and conditions of the situation demanded, therefore, a new plan of operations which would give to the mobility of the fighting burghers, to their intimate knowledge of the country, their splendid shooting power, and their unique capacity for endurance opportunities for asserting such an advantage over the enemy as would neutralize to some extent the effectiveness of his numbers in pitched battles. These opportunities could only be found in such a system of warfare as Christian De Wet had initiated after Paardeberg.

Chapter XXXII

SANNAS POST

De Wet rallies disheartened burghers—Retreat of third Free State army from Colesberg to Kroonstad—De Wet leaves Brandfort with 1,000 men to join it—Waylays Broadwood's command at Sannas Post (Koorn Spruit)—Reckons safely on British stupidity—Heroism of British captain—Death of Lieutenant Nix—complete rout of British—De Wet captures British force near Reddersburg—Unsuccessful siege of Wepener—Botha's narrow escape.

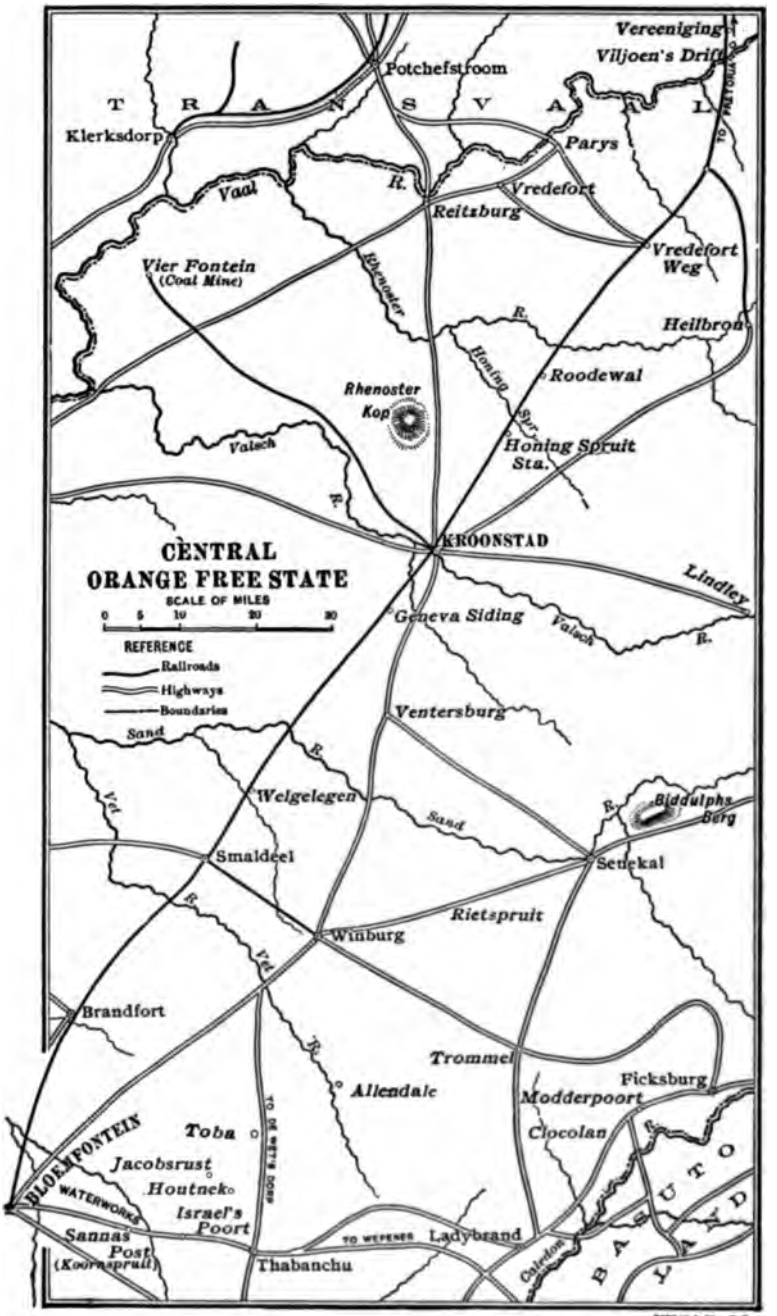
THE first effective blow struck at the enemy after the capture of Bloemfontein was the work of Christian De Wet. He had set to work after the British occupation of the Free State capital to mobilize his commandoes again, visiting villages and farms in the Brandfort and surrounding districts, and rallying the burghers to the field. His influence was very great, especially among the Boer women, who reverenced him for his steadfast loyalty, and for his many striking triumphs over the enemies of their homes and country, and it was largely due to the cooperating patriotism of the noblest race of women who have ever encouraged the cause of freedom that he owed the successful recruiting of the body of burghers who enabled him to win the brilliant victory of Sannas Post. He had fought like a lion from Blaubank to Bloemfontein with his Free State burghers. No defeats discouraged, no disasters dismayed him, and when large numbers of men had retired to their farms, sullen and dispirited over the collapse of Cronje's army, he who was to be henceforth the doughtiest champion of his country in the field, left Bloemfontein by the road to the north only as the English were entering the city at the other side.

He retired to the hills between the capital and Brandfort, and from there, as the newly appointed Chief Commandant of the Free State army, issued a brief appeal to his countrymen to face the enemy again, and to battle with him for every inch of Free State soil. In this address he gave an indication of the plan of campaign which he had decided upon, and which was destined to meet with such striking success. "We need not be downhearted," he wrote, "as the most wonderful acts which God has done for

us before, and also in this war, were accomplished by small bodies. We trust in God under this trial, and hope that He may strengthen our officers and burghers through this to do their duty to Him, the Government, country, and people even more than before."

Near the end of March he left Brandfort with a force of about 1,000 men and five guns, under the joint command of Piet De Wet (his brother), and his faithful Lieutenant, Andries Cronje. The Chief Commandant's objective was to try and effect a junction with the third Free State army under Generals Ollivier, Grobler, and Lemmer, which had commenced its retreat north from Colesberg after the catastrophe of Paardeberg. This huge column of over 5,000 men, 800 wagons, with guns, ammunition, cattle, and some women and children—refugees from Cape Colony—extended to a length of twenty miles, and had to retreat in between Roberts' huge army at Bloemfontein and the Basuto border on the east. During a period of seventeen days this unwieldly mass of men, cattle, and baggage struggled over a most difficult country, intersected by spruits, rivers, and other obstacles, with fully 50,000 British troops on its left flank, midway on its journey, and ultimately succeeded in reaching Kroonstad without the loss of a single man, gun, cart, or wagon. The marvelous achievement of carrying such a force for a distance of fully 200 miles (counting the détours occasioned by the difficulties of the route) was only equaled by the astounding inability of Lord Roberts to send a sufficient force of troops across fifty miles of country, directly eastward from Bloemfontein, to intercept Grobler's column and pin it in between the British legions and the Basuto border. No other fact connected with the operations of Roberts' great army in the Free State bears more eloquent testimony to the wretched condition to which the British troops were reduced after Paardeberg, than this failure of the English Commander-in-Chief to intercept this long, straggling procession during its seventeen days' toilsome journey from Cape Colony to Kroonstad.

A force of some 2,000 British troops had, however, been sent to occupy Ladybrand and Thabanchu, eastwards towards the Basuto border, and across the route which Grobler's and Ollivier's forces had to take on their way to Kroonstad. A portion of these troops had come in contact with the advance guard of Ollivier's army under General Lemmer, north of Commissie Drift, and were so roughly handled that the main body in Ladybrand and Thabanchu were at once recalled by Roberts, who feared their capture by the retreating Free Staters and Cape Colony Volunteers. It was these troops so recalled which Christian De Wet encountered at Sannas


CENTRAL
ORANGE FREE STATE
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
TRANSVAAL
Vereeniging
Viljoen's Drift
Potchefstroom
Klerksdorp
Parys
Vaal
R.
Vredefort
Reitzburg
Vredefort Weg
Vier Fontein
(Coal Mine)
Rhenoster
Heilbron
Honing Spr.
Roodewal
Rhenoster Kop
Valesch
Honing Spruit Sta.
KROONSTAD
Lindley
Geneva Siding
Valesch
Ventersburg
Sand
Vet
Welgelegen
Biddulphs Berg
Smaldeel
Senekal
Rietspruit
Winburg
Brandfort
Trommel
Allendale
Ficksburg
Modderpoort
Clocolan
Toba
Jacobsrust
Houtneck
Israel's Poort
BLOEMFONTEIN
WATERWORKS
Sannas Post
(Koornspruit)
Thabanchu
TO WEPENER
Ladybrand
Caledon
BASUTOLAND
TO PRETORIA
TO DE WET'S DORP

Post while on his way to succor Ollivier's and Grobler's retreating commandoes.

The road from Thabanchu to Bloemfontein runs into a valley a few miles before it crosses the Modder River, close to the reservoir at Sannas Post, from which the Free State capital is supplied with its water. This valley, with the river running through it, gradually widens in a southwesterly direction until it merges into the open country east of the city. Two miles west of the Waterworks the valley is some three miles wide, having irregular ridges to the north and south. At this part of the valley the road from Sannas Post to Bloemfontein crosses by a drift over a spruit which has worn so deep and wide a channel in the veldt that a large force of men could conceal themselves and their horses in the bed of the stream, in line to the right and left of the drift, without being seen 100 yards away from either bank. This deep channel is known as Koorn Spruit. It runs south of the road, from east to west, almost parallel with the roadway for the two miles from Sannas Post to the drift, and then bends north, where, at a distance of about three more miles, it leads into the Modder River.

The English who were on their way to Bloemfontein were a portion of General French's division, and were under the command of General Broadwood. The British officer was in charge also of an enormous baggage train of ammunition, forage, cattle, and other belongings of the garrisons of Ladybrand and Thabanchu, and his progress was necessarily hampered by this very cumbersome charge.

De Wet learned from his scouts that the enemy had left Thabanchu on Friday, the 30th of March, and would be likely to reach the Waterworks at Sannas Post that night. The strength of the British in men and guns was also communicated, together with the appetizing facts regarding the baggage, provisions, and ammunition, and the man who had so easily captured Lord Roberts' huge convoy at Blaubank resolved to repeat the operation at General Broadwood's expense.

He had outspanned for the night of March 30 at a farm near Osspruit, some fourteen miles due north of Sannas Post, and about midway between Brandfort and Thabanchu. His force had been augmented by 400 or 500 men since leaving Brandfort. On learning the news brought by his scouts, he gave immediate orders to saddle horses and prepare for a night march. The enemy's force, only one-third stronger than his own command, and the opportunity for attack which the convoy would offer, made him resolve to throw his men across Broadwood's path in a surprise engagement, and deliver a smashing blow at some of Roberts' troops almost at the gates of Bloemfontein.

With De Wet to resolve was to execute, and without yet fully considering his plan in any detail, the commando directed its march southward past Osskopje, towards the Bloemfontein Waterworks. His officers were his brother Piet, Commandants Andries Cronje and Nel (the two officers who had cooperated in the capture of the Dublin and Gloucester regiments at Nicholson's Nek) and Commandants Froneman, Wessels, Theron (of Bethlehem), and Gert Van der Merwe. The burghers, who numbered about 1,500 men, belonged mainly to the Kroonstad, Brandfort, Heilbron, Winburg, Ladybrand, and Dewetsdorp districts. The guns consisted of three Krupp quick-firers and two Maxim-Nordenfelts; the latter pieces being in charge of a German-American named Von Losberg. The American, French, and Netherlands military attachés accompanied the commando, and were spectators of the sensational engagement which followed.

De Wet off-saddled in the middle of the night when within about five miles of where the English were encamped, and he explained to his officers the plan which he had decided upon during the march from Osspruit. The plan was this: Broadwood's troops were in bivouac at Sannas Post, in between two drifts; one over the Modder River, through which the road from Thabanchu to Sannas Post passed, and the other, about two miles ahead, where the same road, after leaving Sannas Post, descended into the deep recess of Koorn Spruit on its way to Bloemfontein.

The scheme of action was, to divide his men into two divisions: one, 400 strong, under himself, to be concealed in the bed of the Spruit; and the other, 1,000 men, under his brother Piet and Andries Cronje, to post themselves north and south of the Waterworks, from whence they were to attack the enemy at daybreak, and drive the troops towards the drift over the Spruit, where the ambush was laid. Like the smooth movement of oiled clockwork, these places were occupied in the early hours of Saturday morning without a hitch; neither men nor guns being seen or heard where, only two miles away, 2,000 British troops and their convoy reposed oblivious of danger; there being no scouting, nor patrol, nor sentries, nor anybody ahead of or around the sleeping Tommies! De Wet's most daring plan thus placed him with his back to Roberts' huge army at Bloemfontein, and his flanks open to attack by any force which might be on the road from the city to meet Broadwood's convoy. He staked everything upon the enemy's customary stupidity and want of military common sense, and he won the prize, as he deserved to do.

The mules and baggage of the commandoes were left four or five miles north of the river, near a valley through which it had been

decided to retire with the convoy and guns if the coup should succeed, and by which way a retreat towards Osspruit should be made if the enemy were reenforced from Bloemfontein before a decisive result could be obtained.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when an adjutant reported to the general down at the drift that all the positions in the plan of attack had been occupied as ordered, and that everything was in readiness. Piet De Wet and Andries Cronje were to open the attack with their guns on Broadwood's camp when the light should reveal its exact position, and at such time as, in their judgment, the greatest confusion might be caused thereby to the convoy. Strict orders were given by the Chief Commandant to his own men that no shot should be fired from the bed of the Spruit until he gave the signal by firing first. And thus under the great tension of the daring enterprise in which the commando was engaged, the burghers smoked their pipes and waited for the light which was to give them sterner occupation.

It was about half-past four when the boom of Piet De Wet's Krupps eastward rent the oppressive stillness of the early morning, and instantly the whole British camp was thrown into the wildest commotion. Teams were hurriedly yoked, carts were driven off, and in a short time a column of wagons was sent on its way down the road towards the drift, where nothing could be seen to indicate the presence of a single Boer. The Krupps and pom-poms continued to shell the camp from the rear and sides of the valley, and horses and men had already been hit, while vehicles were knocked over, and a portion of the baggage set on fire. Meanwhile wagons and carts were approaching the drift, followed by mounted men.

These came along the road without any patrol or scouts in front! The first drivers to reach the drift came down the sloping road, finding rifles pointed at their heads from the right and left as they reached the bottom. They were ordered down, and burghers jumped up and took their places, whipping the teams, and carrying the wagons up the opposite side of the Spruit without any delay. Several teams were treated in this way without apparently creating any suspicion in the line behind that anything had gone wrong. Slowly, however, a score of horsemen came moving along, in between other wagons, and upon descending into the Spruit they were met with the stern demand of "Hands up!" Seeing how things stood they quietly surrendered, without a word, were disarmed, and placed to the right in the bottom of the Spruit. These, however, were not seen by their officers behind to emerge again from the hollow, and one of these officers, with the rank of captain,

rode quickly down towards the drift to find out the cause of the halt by his men. He was instantly covered with rifles, and General De Wet, recognizing his rank, and seeing that the ambush could not be much longer concealed, addressed the officer, telling him that he (De Wet) had a large force surrounding the British convoy, and, being wishful to save life, desired him to return to the troops advancing towards the drift, explain matters to them, and induce them to surrender. The captain appeared to assent to the general's suggestion, and turned back, riding up the steep incline to where fully a hundred or more mounted men were approaching along the road. De Wet followed him up the sloping bank, rifle in hand, raising the weapon to his shoulder as the English officer reached his troops. There was a half minute's pause as the captain was seen talking to his men. Suddenly these men were seen to wheel round and dash back upon the column. Instantly Christian De Wet, dropping on one knee, took careful aim, and the English officer rolled from his saddle with a bullet through his body. No Victoria Cross could adequately reward an act which was deliberately done with the knowledge that death might demand an instant penalty for the spoken warning; for the officer, whose name is still, I believe, not associated with this piece of antique heroism, knew right well what the stern Boer officer behind him with the rifle meant to do if a signal of danger was given. It was a superb act of noble self-sacrifice, and the English who survive him, assuming he was killed, are unworthy of such deeds being done in their service, if his name is allowed to remain in oblivion.

The general's signal to fire had been given in this sensational incident, and instantly the rifles of the burghers were pouring bullets into the column along the bank of the Spruit. Broadwood's guns were at the rear of his forces, and had not yet started from Sannas Post when the fight had begun. These guns, some twelve in number, were quickly answering the Boer pieces from Piet De Wet's position to the southeast, and the forces on both sides were soon engaged in a spirited encounter, all within a radius of some two miles. The Boers, as is their habit, shot down the oxen and teams attached to all the wagons, and completely crippled the convoy in this way; the vehicles being left on the road in a long line extending almost all the way between the two drifts. After the first panic the English were rallied somewhat by their officers to protect the guns, and at a few other points where groups could be assembled. Each of these groups, however, was attacked by the burghers who followed every twist and turn of the enemy's frantic efforts to find cover from which to beat them back. The burghers in the Spruit advanced eastward towards where Broad-

wood's artillery were positioned, with the purpose of assailing the service of the guns and of capturing the pieces. The cover of the Spruit enabled them to get due south of Sannas Post, in between Piet De Wet's Krupps and the British artillery, and in a very few minutes the whole entourage of the enemy's batteries was shot down or scattered. A few of the guns had been removed by some mounted men shortly before the rifle attack from the Spruit had opened, and these escaped with their escort; but the others, seven in number, were pounced upon by a rush of men, and the place where the English had bivouacked during the night was soon in possession of the burghers.

Midway between the drifts two sections of De Wet's men, one under Andries Cronje, and the other under the head Commandant, had closed in upon a body of the enemy who were endeavoring to make a break over that part of the Spruit towards Bloemfontein. There was a lively rifle engagement for fully an hour at this point, but, as the English were shot down from right and left, a white flag was hoisted, and some 400 troops laid down their arms. They were at once taken northeast to the Kloof through which a portion of the captured convoy was already being led. While another contest at the junction of the river and the Spruit was proceeding, the greater part of Broadwood's force had succeeded in retreating towards Bloemfontein in between Piet De Wet's position and the road, and the Boer guns were turned upon these with an accuracy of aim which accounted for a large number of men and horses. At every single point where any attempt at a rally was made by the English, a Boer officer was ready with a body of burghers to rush to the nearest available cover, and engage the group thus attempting to make a stand against the resistless farmers with their deadly aim and galloping ponies. The enemy were in this way easily beaten at every point on the battle-field; their own Armstrongs at the Waterworks being turned upon them while Von Losberg was sending his pom-pom shells into their flanks as they flew towards the city. Some 500 burghers took up the pursuit of the fleeing Tommies as far as the ground would permit them, but their tired horses were unequal to the task of heading them off, and the bulk of Broadwood's men managed to clear away; leaving behind them 400 prisoners, including 18 officers, 7 Armstrong guns, 12 cartloads of ammunition, 110 wagons of provision and forage, 1,200 draft mules, oxen, and horses, with 600 rifles, and large quantities of baggage, tents, etc. The killed and wounded on the English side were not counted by the victors, as it was necessary for them to retire north to the hills before British reenforcements should arrive from Bloemfontein, where the guns

could be plainly heard during the battle of the morning. It was estimated, however, that Broadwood lost 150 men in killed and wounded in addition to his prisoners. The Boer casualties numbered three men killed and ten wounded, only.

Lieutenant Nix, the Netherlands military attaché, was unfortunately hit with a fragment of an English shell while watching the battle. He was sitting on the bank of the Spruit near where the American and French attachés were located, and while he was in the act of looking through his field-glasses was mortally wounded in the chest. He was a modest young officer, only twenty-three, who had made himself very popular with all with whom he had come in contact since arriving on his mission, and his death was much lamented by the Boer officers. He had been only recently married, and it was a deeply affecting scene when the life-blood was ebbing away through a wound that could not be stanched, while the poor young fellow was in the act of dictating to Captain Reichman a letter full of loving expressions, spoken in dying whispers, to his young wife in Holland.

The English made a wretched exhibition of fighting qualities and of generalship in this instance, considering they were numerically stronger in both men and guns than De Wet's forces, and that, being so near Roberts' huge army that their guns could be heard, reenforcements would be sure to arrive in a few hours' time. A large number of mounted men rushed southward past Piet De Wet's position, *ventre à terre*, at the first attack on the camp, and made off in the direction of Bloemfontein almost without drawing bridle. Possibly these were galloping with the tidings of the battle, and in order to obtain help. A smaller body raced back on the Thabanchu road, pursued for several miles by burghers who, however, were unable to come up with the flying Hussars. Finally General Broadwood seems to have collected numbers of his troops about four miles southwest of the Koorn Spruit drift, from whence, however, he made no attempt to go back for his guns. Here both the general and his troops were observed about noon by General Colvile, who had left Bloemfontein at daybreak with 4,000 men in order to cover Broadwood's retirement with the convoy. This force had been unable to march the distance, some fifteen miles, in time to take part in the fight, but Colvile's division was within some six miles of the drift over the Spruit as De Wet's men were removing the convoy, guns and all, northeast to the hills. Not only were close upon 6,000 of the enemy thus in sight of the 1,500 Boers in the very act of clearing the field of the trophies of their triumph, but a cavalry brigade, under General French, had also been despatched from Bloemfontein by Lord Roberts

to cooperate with Colvile. This auxiliary force, however, mounted tho it was, succeeded in reaching the scene of the encounter at ten o'clock on Sunday morning; only twenty-four hours too late.

In the whole conduct of the British in this engagement, officers and men, there was not a single redeeming feature. The troops were knocked at the first onset into a panic from which they appeared unable to recover, while the officers exhibited neither the spirit, tact, nor capacity to avail themselves of the opportunities which the number of men and guns at their disposal, and their proximity to Bloemfontein, gave them to strike back at De Wet's small commando. For him it was, in every sense, a brilliant achievement. When spoken to that evening upon the encounter and its lessons, the general made the extraordinary reply: "We feel that the war has just begun, and we have every reason to be hopeful of the result." That is now (March, 1902) near two years ago, and England has still over 200,000 troops in South Africa!

Following up his succesful coup at Sannas Post, General De Wet moved rapidly to the southeast from the scene of his victory with the object of locating another isolated force which was reported to be in his own native district of Dewetsdorp. Tidings came that a body of 500 British had entered and captured this village on the 1st of April. On nearing the place De Wet was informed that the enemy had retreated hurriedly on learning of the approach of the Boers, and had gone towards Reddersburg, due south of Bloemfontein. The general wheeled his commando in that direction, and was soon in the locality of the British encampment. His scouts brought him information of the strength and position of the foe, and plans for the capture of the troops were soon arranged.

The enemy's position was found to be on the reverse side of a long kopje, south of where the Boer forces had halted, and it was determined to place the Tommies, as at Sannas Post, between two fires, in a surprise attack. Half of the commando were to move round the southern side of the English, while the other half remained to the north; this section, under the general's immediate command, to commence the fray.

The enemy were completely surprised, so negligent had their officers been in omitting scouting precautions. They made a plucky stand, however, against superior numbers, and held their position during the whole of the day. De Wet gradually drew his lines closer around his adversaries, and placed his guns, under cover of the night, where the British would be at the mercy of a combined artillery and rifle fire on the following morning. When the light

on Wednesday enabled the officer in command of the enemy's force to recognize the hopelessness of any continued struggle, he ordered the white flag to be hoisted, and surrendered.

Twelve officers and 459 men were taken prisoner. There were some fifty casualties on the enemy's side. De Wet's loss was trivial.

I chanced to meet these 471 prisoners on their way to Kroonstad. They belonged to General Gatacre's division, and were a mixed body of Royal Irish and Mounted Infantry, and all wore the appearance of fine strapping fellows. One of them, evidently an English Tommy, mistaking me for a Boer, addressed me in a defiant tone, saying, "We're a coming back again, you bet your life!"

Having despatched his batch of prisoners round by the east of Lord Roberts' huge army at Bloemfontein on to Kroonstad and Pretoria, De Wet turned east again and made for Wepener, close to the Basuto border. Here a body of Colonial British under Colonel Dalgetty were strongly entrenched, with ammunition, provisions, and water. They had heard of the disasters of Sannas Post and Reddersburg, and had made all possible preparations for an expected attack. De Wet's men were placed to the best advantage when the attack was delivered, but so strong had the British officers rendered their entrenchments and so stoutly did the Colonial troops hold their ground, that the place was successfully held for seventeen days, until the besieged were finally relieved by the mounted columns under Generals French, Hart, and Hamilton, with which Lord Roberts had resolved to clear the country east of Bloemfontein preparatory to his advance northward from the Free State capital to Pretoria.

While the siege of Wepener was in progress Commandant-General Louis Botha, accompanied only by two of his adjutants, rode from Osspruit Camp near Brandfort to visit General De Wet's laager. On his return north by Thabanchu, he was riding within a mile of a British camp, in the dark, believing it to be a Boer laager, when he was fortunately met by a Boer scout who was watching the movements of the English, and who thus saved the head of the Transvaal army from walking straight into the hands of the enemy.

Chapter XXXIII

THE LAST MEETING OF THE VOLKSRAAD

DRESS OF THE BOER LEGISLATORS—EMPTY SEATS IN THE CHAMBER—WREATHS WHERE HEROES SAT—PRESIDENT KRUGER'S PRESENCE—HIS MANNER OF SPEECH — A MEMORABLE PRONOUNCEMENT — PRETORIA BURGHERS AND THE SURRENDER—THE DEFENSE OF THE CAPITAL ABANDONED—THE JOHANNESBURG MINES SPARED—MEN OF PROFITS PREVAIL OVER MEN OF ACTION—MORE CALUMNIES AGAINST PRESIDENT KRUGER.

ON the 7th of May the Volksraad met in the palatial legislative building which with the Palace of Justice forms the chief architectural attractions of Pretoria. The Transvaal House of Commons was a well-lighted, handsome chamber, larger and far more attractive than the meeting place of English members of Parliament. The Chairman's dais was raised some three feet above the floor, with the President's seat to the right. Below this there were seats reserved for members of the Executive Council, and of the Administration; the latter officials being permitted to attend the sessions of the Raad to answer questions, but not being entitled to vote or otherwise to take part in the proceedings.

The members of the Raad sat in a horseshoe formation of seats in a manner similar to that of members of Continental legislatures; each member having his allotted chair, with a desk in front for writing and kindred purposes.

In an outer semicircle of seats, the members of the Second Raad took their places when a joint session of both Chambers became necessary.

Tiers of chairs were placed for visitors on the floor, beyond to the right and left of the "Raadsleden," and these were soon occupied by foreigners and others who were wishful to witness what looked likely to be the closing scene in the legislative life of the Transvaal Parliament.

It was to me a scene as pathetic as it was, in many respects, surprising. I had fully expected seeing the members, almost all of whom had been in the field for months, coming to their legislative duties with bandoliers and Mausers, as if only on a hurried leave from the lines in front of Roberts' moving columns, with a

soldier's eagerness to get through with the needed speeches and resolutions so as to lose no time in returning to their commandoes again. But the Boers are in everything a people apart, with their own methods and manners; whether in warfare or in law-making. The members assembled, all in a uniform black dress, including frock coats, tall hats, and white ties. This was, it appears, the regulation costume prescribed by the sartorial rules of the Assembly, and each conformed to the ordinary obligation of this rule on this momentous occasion, as if no war was being waged any nearer to the threatened capital of the South African Republic than the Philippine Islands.

The dress to me was painfully suggestive of a funeral ceremony over the body of what would soon be a slain Republic.

On several seats wreaths of mourning were placed, denoting where those members who had died fighting at the front were wont to sit. General Jan Kock's vacant chair recalled his heroic stand at Elandslaagte, and the chivalry of England's soldiery in robbing this wounded officer of money and clothes, and leaving him thus exposed for ten hours without medical aid. The fate of Mr. Barnard, member for Rustenburg, who was killed by British Kaffirs at Deredepoort, on the 23rd of November, evoked even a more indignant feeling against the enemy that could enlist as allies in such a war the savages who butchered women and children on that occasion. General Joubert's chair bore tokens of a grateful remembrance, while the Vierkleur was thrown across the seat which General Piet Cronje, now in St. Helena, occupied before the war.

Men who had fought in noted battles were soon recognized, even in their semi-clerical attire, as with bronzed faces or scars telling of the severity of the struggle they had gone through, they entered and took their seats. General Lukas Meyer, Chairman of the Raad, who had fought so well from Talana Hill to Pieter's Heights, was easily known by his herculean and soldierly figure and handsome face. Ben Viljoen, the hero of Vaal Krantz, and the intrepid fighter of twenty battles, was there, as anti-Rooinek as ever. General Tobias Smuts, one of the heroes of Spion Kop, looking as genial and as modest as the brave man of real merit generally does on like occasions, was there, and a dozen more members who had borne a less prominent but equally valiant part in the struggle against the enemy.

Two noted members were conspicuously absent, Louis Botha and Jacob H. De la Rey. Both had gone to the front seven months previously, straight from their Parliamentary duties in that Chamber, and had within that time by their genius and military capacity written their names on the scroll of fame among the world's great

commanders. They were, that day, fighting as usual like lions in front of overwhelming numbers; one as Joubert's successor in the headship of the Transvaal army, and the other as the most generally trusted officer of the Federal forces.

Color was added to the otherwise somber scene in the Chamber by the presence of the foreign consuls and attachés in their full-dress uniforms. The French, Russian, German, Italian, Belgian, Portuguese, and Netherlands representatives were in attendance, while Mr. Hay, nominally representing the United States, was a spectator of the proceedings.

There was a tedious amount of congratulatory speech-making of a purely ceremonial character before the President entered the Chamber. The Chairman congratulated the Raad, and the oldest member replied in return courtesy, congratulating its Chairman. The same formality was gone through between the Second Raad and its sessional head, while each member of the Executive Council was next singled out for his special meed of commendation, and a suitable reply was returned in due form.

In the midst of these distributions of mutual praise, President Kruger entered from behind the Speaker's chair, and immediately all the members and spectators rose as a mark of respect until the Chief Executive took his seat. Paul Kruger is not in any physical sense an impressive-looking man. He is massive in build, keenly observant of everybody and everything around him, and naturally attracts attention through the rank he holds, but especially from the fact that he is the one man of this generation who threw down gage of battle to the British Empire. You cannot well picture the man out of his fame, or you would regard him as a commonplace individual, of rough exterior and markedly unpolished manners, who might pass for anybody in particular, from a prosperous farmer to a successful city merchant. But when you know that the man before you is Paul Kruger, that he has been through life the watchful and valiant defender of Boer liberties, and that he has within the previous few months startled the whole civilized world by his work, you are compelled to beat back the prejudices of your eyes and do homage instead to the man whose acts have made him great, as he rises in the Assembly to which, in Grattan's language, he stood as one who had watched at its cradle and might mourn at its grave.

A silence as of a churchyard fell upon the whole Assembly, and again the suggestion of a funeral service was forced upon the mind, with the wreaths on the vacant chairs, the dark costumes of the members, and the long prayer in which the proceedings had been previously opened. The raucous voice of the speaker sounded like

THE VOLKSRAAD BUILDING, PRETORIA

the valedictory address of a minister committing a body to the custody of a grave, and the suggestion was irresistibly conveyed that the President of the Transvaal was performing the burial service upon his own Republic.

Soon, however, this mortuary idea was dispelled. The President's voice became clearer and the words more coherent; the address ringing out in a mingled strain of invective and defiance. It was the first time I had heard him speak. His deficiency in intellectual culture, his reputed ignorance, and all the other English kindly testimonies to his want of Anglo-Saxon excellence, while read with some degree of skepticism, invited doubt as to Oom Paul's gifts of eloquent deliverance. He is, however, a natural orator; rugged in speech, lacking in measured phrase and in logical balance; but passionate and convincing in the unaffected pleading of his earnestness which is joined to a happy command of the Boer tongue in all its native power of persuasive expression.

The action of the hands during the delivery of the short Presidential address was in no way wanting in elocutionary gesture, embracing as it did all the well-known movements of finished platform speaking. There were a few notes in the left hand, but they were not once referred to. The Speaker soon lost himself in the warmth of his subject, and he held his audience spellbound until his final sentence was spoken with its defiant ring and meaning, "I am standing alone! Joubert is dead, Kock is dead, Wolmarans is dead. I stand alone. But God is with us. Shall we lose courage? Never! Never! Never!" and at each utterance of this word, the massive hand descended on the desk and made the Chamber resound with the emphasis of the blow. It was in every word, sentiment, and action the speech of Paul Kruger.

I give the following somewhat inaccurate report of this last utterance of the President before the Volksraad of the doomed little Republic as reported in the Boer press:

"His Honor said that extraordinary circumstances saw the Raad assembled under unique conditions. 'You know how, before the war, they agitated for the franchise. You know what concessions we made; how the burghers demurred and accused us of alienating from them their birthrights. In order to avert bloodshed, we conceded a seven years' franchise; afterwards, again to avert bloodshed, a five years' franchise, and in every case with retrospective power, so that all who so desired might instantly become citizens of this State. We did all this in our supreme efforts to preserve peace and avert war.

"'But they were not satisfied. What did they want? Documents in our possession show that, by manner of a devilish con-

spiracy—I will call it that—they had already schemed the annihilation of the two Republics as early as 1896. We were to be denied a national existence. We are now praying to God in the heavens for material help. We are struggling against a powerful and vindictive enemy, who seeks to destroy us.

"'God will answer our prayer. He will show the world that Might is not Right; that it is well that small nations maintain a separate existence, and that He will not permit the might of a Goliath to crush us.

"'Once more, to avoid further bloodshed, I appealed to the English nation.

"'I appealed to Chamberlain and Salisbury. What did they reply? They said that this miserable nation of Afrikanders must cease to exist. But God says it shall not!

"'God says it may exist, and we shall see who shall be arbiter, these politicians or our just God.

"'Our history has determined us never to surrender our heaven-given rights.

"'See what we have already accomplished! A small band of 30,000 has contested the right of way against over 200,000, and the 30,000 are still alive!

"'They may send thousands more—ay, hundreds of thousands.

"'I will not prophesy; but it is my firm conviction that God will say: "So far and no farther."

"'They say this people shall no longer exist.

"'But it is not for them to decide. God governs.

"'God reigns. To His decision we must bow; but He is with us.

"'Let us humiliate ourselves and put our trust in Him.

"'In this bitter and unequal struggle, even if England invade the land we will triumph.

"'"Houd moed." The whole world, our prisoners, every right-minded community is praying for us. We shall triumph, for we live in the Lord.

"'Let each man do his duty and we shall triumph as assuredly as the sun shines upon us from the sky.

"'We have "mooi gepraat of nie mooi gepraat." It availed nothing against our vindictive and voracious foe, our eternal foe, our everlasting enemy. Since 1836 we have been a free people, and with God's help we will remain so.

"'Let us be obedient to His teachings and stand like men.

"'I am standing alone, tho the State Secretary and Schalk Burger are giving me splendid and loyal assistance. But the old familiar faces of the Executive Council are no more. My right hand, Joubert, is dead; Kock is dead; Wolmarans is dead. I stand alone.

"'But shall we lose courage? Never! Never!! Never!!! We have the entire and whole-hearted and unanimous sympathy of peoples with us throughout the world.'"

The heroic old man's eloquence availed nothing with some of the commercial burghers of Pretoria who listened to the memorable utterance. The officials of the administration, too, were, according to report, divided in feeling; a few being in favor of making terms with the British, who were advancing each day nearer to the property, buildings, banking accounts, and other possibly perishable belongings of men who had made money out of the Transvaal Government, and who were ready to earn an honest penny out of the invading English on their arrival. There were only a very few of such men, and their names were widely known. Contractors, jobbers, lobbyists, mine agents, and syndicate men were hovering round, all counseling surrender, and denouncing any attempt at defending the capital against Roberts' irresistible march. In the hotels and in the streets pro-British partisans were openly advising capitulation, and promising the concession of most favorable terms by the English Commander-in-Chief when he should reach Pretoria, if the Republic would only lay down its arms. With this interested advice of English adherents, the citizens who were loyal in sentiment, but unwilling to sacrifice their business or have their savings confiscated, joined in the open advocacy of surrender, and in strong protest against Pretoria being subjected to the injury and ordeal of a siege.

Two questions agitated general attention during the days preceding Roberts' final advance from Kroonstad to Pretoria: Should Pretoria be defended to the death, as the world had been led to believe it would be? and, were the mines of Johannesburg to be made the medium of visiting poetic justice upon those who had provoked the war by means of the millions which the Rand had yielded to these cosmopolitan money-mongers? In the laagers where I had heard these questions discussed before coming back to Pretoria, the sentiment was unanimous in favor of blowing up the accursed mines. They were, to the true burgher mind and imagination, the source of all the evils which had befallen the State; the cause of ruined homes and of thousands of mourning homesteads. Justice, therefore, required that the capitalists of London, Paris, Berlin, and other places who had encouraged England to strike at the life of the Republic, should be punished in their invested wealth. The men who had fought held these views. Those who had not fought, but had made profits, were emphatically opposed to any extreme measures of the kind. It would alienate German, French, and American feeling, they urged; just as if such feeling had in any way effectively exerted itself to prevent the war. The men of profits prevailed. President Kruger allowed himself to be persuaded that the blowing up of the mines would be con-

sidered by European powers as contrary to the code of civilized warfare, and that the members of the Government could be held accountable for all injury done to foreign investors' interests in any destruction of property which was not the result of a necessary measure of legitimate warfare. He was destined to learn that, as a reward for his forbearance in preventing the blowing up of the Johannesburg mines, English generals were to openly violate every single clause of the code of warfare agreed upon at The Hague, and that the same civilized powers who would have had their sympathies alienated, forsooth, on account of injury done to property on the Rand, looked in absolute indifference at the burning, destruction, and violation of the farms, property, and homes of the Boer Republics.

Paul Kruger's power was asserted, and the holes which had been drilled into the shafts of the wealthiest gold mines did not receive the explosives which were to have wiped out £100,000,000 worth of English and other foreign investments. The old man to whom the stock jobbers of London had sent the blackguard message on the declaration of war, "For what you are about to receive may the Lord make you truly thankful," rose above resentment, and thus saved the property of some of his most despicable and unmanly foes.

The expectant world was equally astonished at the refusal of the Boers to defend Pretoria. A prolonged stand was universally expected to be made at the capital, where a circle of surrounding hills, at a convenient distance from the town, with strong forts commanding the country at the three most vulnerable points of approach, led the public everywhere to count upon a determined and resourceful resistance. Stories had been widely circulated of wonderful siege guns which would be found mounted on the Pretoria forts, with a range of ten miles; of labyrinthian fortifications, underground magazines, and of mines innumerable, planted over the perimeter of the threatened city. It turned out that there were no such guns in existence, and no such mines, and the resolution which the Executive arrived at, under the circumstances, not to challenge Roberts to a final combat within the area of the town's situation, was subsequently shown to be eminently practical and wise. It was Christian De Wet's plan, and not that of the military critic in far-off Europe who wanted a big fight to a finish at Pretoria, which was calculated to cost England the more men, money, and prestige before the finish was to be finally fought according to Boer plans and purposes.

During these last days of the Transvaal capital, statements of the most outrageous character were industriously circulated night

Kock Kruger Cronje Coetzer

A GROUP OF LEADERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

and day against the President by pro-British agents within Pretoria and a few recreant burghers. He had taken all the gold from the treasury; had commandeered the deposits in the banks; was secretly negotiating a surrender with Lord Roberts, and was ready to fly to Europe with all his wealth, etc., etc. All this and kindred calumnies against the now doomed Republic were the work of a few men who had fattened upon the State in its strength and prosperity, and who were now hungry to participate, as they expected, in a new régime in which this treasonable work against the falling little State was hoped to pave the way for future favor and reward.

The bullion which had been taken to a place of security, was part of that which had resulted from the working of some of the richest Rand mines by the Government. This resort to the mines for the necessary means of carrying on the conflict forced upon the Republic was a perfectly legitimate proceeding under the laws of the State. Charters were given and titles were registered under a Constitution which claimed the reasonable use of all property within the State when it was essential to utilize such means in defense of the country against external aggression. The Transvaal Executive made use only of such mines as would yield the money required in a continuance of the war, and the bullion round which so many English falsehoods were woven, with the purpose of libeling the character of the President, was the residue of what the Government had commandeered from the mines in the service of the State.

Contractors in Pretoria and merchants at Delagoa Bay had been paid in bullion for work done or for goods supplied to the Government, and gold shipped to Europe by these persons was put down by English correspondents as Mr. Kruger's mercenary provision for his selfish exile in Holland.

What the President and the Executive had really done was the simple result of the decision arrived at, in conjunction with General Botha, not to defend the city. The bullion in the treasury was consequently removed eastward to a place of safety, not by Mr. Kruger, but by the Government, for the obvious purpose of meeting the further expenses of the war, and the liabilities already incurred. This done and certain State papers also being secured, the President and the members of his administration stood ready to evacuate the capital when the right moment of departure should arrive.

Chapter XXXIV

EVACUATION OF PRETORIA

THE ADVANCE OF LORD ROBERTS—THE BOER FORCES FALL BACK—THE ENGLISH ENTER PRETORIA—BOTHA'S FINAL WORDS IN THE ABANDONED CAPITAL OF THE REPUBLIC.

FROM the 13th of March until the 30th of April Lord Roberts remained at Bloemfontein with his huge army. This long inaction, following the sensational British victory at Paardeberg, occasioned some impatient criticism in England, where the real condition of the British troops was badly understood. The delay was a wise resolve on the part of the English general. It was absolutely necessitated on his part by the wear and tear his troops had undergone in the month's marching and fighting from the Modder River Junction to the Free State capital. He knew well how that experience had affected the campaigning spirit and capacity of his men, and, anticipating a sterner task in the carrying out of his resolve to reach Pretoria, he prudently gave his soldiers a long rest.

Roberts in preparing his advance on Pretoria adopted the same tactics which he had employed in deceiving Cronje. He sent troops to Fourteen Streams, at the extreme northwest of the Orange Free State, as if it was his intention to break through there so as to avoid the hills which stood in the way of a movement due north from Bloemfontein by Brandfort, Kroonstad, and the Vaal River. Many of the Boer officers whom I met at Brandfort believed this would be the line of the enemy's march, and so did Villebois-Mareuil. General De la Rey, however, whose judgment has been uniformly right in critical emergencies, rejected this idea as absurd. He held that Roberts was tied to the railway line for his commissariat and communications, and would not dream of marching his huge army so long a distance while so far removed from his base; especially after the rude experiences which his convoy underwent on the occasion of the advance from Modder River Junction to Bloemfontein. Notwithstanding this sound view, the 4,000 Boers in and around Brandfort at the end of April were weakened by the despatch of 800 to Fourteen Streams to reenforce Commandant

Andries Cronje, who, with some 1,500 more burghers, was held there by a large force of British under Lord Methuen, threatening the Free State side of the Vaal River as if to be ready for an advance at that point into the yet uninvaded territory of the South African Republic.

The Boer forces in front of the British on the eve of Lord Roberts' advance from the Free State capital, were located as follows: At Brandfort, the then nearest Boer position to the British army at Bloemfontein, General De la Rey was in chief command of about 3,000 burghers; mainly made up of the Ermelo, Carolina, and other Transvaal commandoes. East of this, some dozen miles away, Generals Philip Botha and Kolbe had a combined force of 1,500 men, while General Christian De Wet, and other Free State officers were already falling back before the extreme right wing of Roberts' army from the districts round Thabanchu, and the borders of Basutoland, north towards Kroonstad. These latter commandoes numbered from 1,500 to 2,500 men. At Fourteen Streams, on the extreme west, Andries Cronje had the number of burghers already mentioned. The total Boer forces holding a line of defensive positions extending right across from east to west of the Orange Free State, a distance of near 200 miles, amounted to no more than 8,000. Less than half of these were available for De la Rey on the 2nd day of May when the advanced lines of a British army of 30,000 emerged from behind the hills east of Taffel Kop and made for the village of Brandfort, the first stage on Roberts' journey to Pretoria.

As already related, I chanced to be with Commandant-General Louis Botha at Glencoe, in Natal, when the news of the British movement on Brandfort was received. It was in a telegram from De la Rey and read as follows: "The English are crossing over the plain. They are as numerous as locusts. I cannot shoot them back!"

Every possible effort was now made to send help to De la Rey. General Botha left Glencoe at once, taking with him the Standerton commando from the forces in front of General Buller. He had to travel north from Natal to Pretoria, then south over the Vaal River to the front. While transacting some business in the capital, a large number of the men who had come with him took train back again to their homes, in and around Standerton. Back went the young general that same night, rallied the men again, and succeeded in bringing all of them with him in his journey to join De la Rey. It was manifest, however, from this painful incident, and from the general reluctance of most of the old burghers to return to the front, that the mass of the elder Boers in the Trans-

vaal and Orange Free State commenced to look upon the struggle against the British "locusts" as hopeless. Cronje's surrender had broken the heart of their good fortune, and the failure of any European power to intervene in their behalf dispelled a lingering hope in an ultimate manifestation of that Divine assistance in which they had so long and so sincerely believed.

Before Louis Botha could reach the scene of renewed action, De la Rey, who had been reenforced by a few small bodies, including Blake's Irish Brigade, was forced back from Brandfort and retired towards Smaldeel, using his little force to the best advantage in retarding the too rapid progress of Roberts. It was not possible, however, to stop effectively the way of ten men by the efforts of one, and this was the disproportion between the opposing forces. The English general sent forward a huge mass of men with whom to bear down resistance in his immediate front, while his mounted troops were extended for miles to his right and left, with the object of turning the Boer positions whenever a stand should be made by De la Rey's center. In this manner, and by the sheer weight of numbers alone, the Boers were compelled to fall back from one position to another, without being able to make any effective stand against such tactics and numbers.

There are three streams, each with deep beds, crossing the road from Brandfort to the Vaal River; the Vet, the Zand, and the Valsch rivers, with several spruits in addition; at each of which a fight might have been made with a force of 10,000 men, even against Roberts' hosts. But with De la Rey's 4,000, no sooner were the beds of these rivers reached and occupied, and men placed in position to contest the passage of the British center column, than a cloud of cavalry would be seen miles to the right and left, on the north of the stream, menacing the burghers' line of retreat. In face of such odds there was no alternative, short of a hopeless fight against overwhelming numbers at some given place, save that of a continued falling back upon the Vaal River.

The Commandant-General caught up with De la Rey after a three hours' stand had been made at the Zand River. Philip Botha's commando had made a gallant fight at this stream, in which several British were killed. The march of Roberts' column was arrested for the night, while the Boer guns were carried safely to Ventersburg, ahead. Here on the following day the Commandant-General at the head of the Ermelo, Standerton, and Wakkerstroom skeletons of these famed commandoes charged a large force of advancing English who were a few miles in front of Roberts' main column, and drove them back upon their main lines, capturing some prisoners. Occasional encounters of this kind, and isolated acts of signal

bravery, occurred in the rear of what was now a total force of some 5,000 Boers, most of them retiring without fighting—doggedly, sullenly, hopelessly retiring. Night and day from the time of the brief combat at the Zand River, did Generals Botha and De la Rey, with President Steyn, appeal to and implore the men who had fought in fifty successful engagements, and always against odds, to turn round and stand with the few men who were contesting every mile of the ground with the advancing foe. In vain. That haunting specter of Paardeburg was ever present to the eyes of the hitherto resolute men who had so frequently fought and beaten England's best troops. Their only thought seemed to be to retire behind the broad and deep shelter of the Vaal River.

In this way, under the most discouraging circumstances for the Federal cause, the British, to their own agreeable surprise, were able to reach Kroonstad, half the distance to Pretoria, in one of the three weeks which Lord Roberts believed might be required for his task.

On the 11th of May the English army entered the temporary capital of the Free State. Generals Botha and De la Rey, along with President Steyn, moved out of the fever-stricken town as Roberts' forces were crossing the Valsch River, at the southern boundary of the place. The last men to leave Kroonstad, however, were Blake's Brigade, who were nearly caught by the enemy while engaged in a hurried and hungry contest with the viands of the Grand Hotel.

All the Boer forces from east to west of the Free State were now falling back on the Vaal River, the boundary line between the two Republics, while the once dreaded little army of the Tugela was also retreating north on Laing's Nek, through which it had passed into Natal just seven months previously. Retiring yet fighting was the work of the younger Boers, the Cape Afrikanders, and the Uitlander Volunteers, but it was retiring and no fighting with the mass of the elder burghers.

At the Vaal, there was only the semblance of a stand made. The English cavalry had crossed the river ten miles west and east of Botha's retreating column, and the movement was still backward ever. The railway was torn up, bridges were blown down, culverts were destroyed, but this was about the extent of the opposition which was shown by the demoralized burghers to the advance of the once-despised Rooinek foe.

The lines of the retiring Boer army became thinner as the Vaal River was crossed and the Transvaal soil was reached. Many of the Free State burghers had slipped away during the night, and the resisting force of the harassed little column became weaker yet by

these desertions. These were still the elder Boers, but tho they left the ranks at this juncture, in this manner, they were yet to right themselves in the eyes of an admiring world, and to prove, in many a daring and successful encounter, that they were men who had been only temporarily dispirited, and not men willingly beaten in the fight for their country's independence.

From the Vaal to the environs of Johannesburg Botha's ranks were increased by a few hundred men who had gone from Pretoria and the towns of the Rand to help to keep the English back. The conflict in front of the Boer center became more active as the nature of the ground grew better for positions of advantage on one side, and more difficult for Roberts' advance on the other. The English had fully expected that extreme measures would be resorted to at Johannesburg to destroy the mines, and, possibly, to burn the city which had caused the war, and Roberts' plans after crossing the Vaal River were directed towards the defeat of such purposes should they be attempted. Nothing of this kind took place, owing to the decision arrived at by President Kruger, and the occupation of Johannesburg was effected, after some desultory firing had taken place at Germiston.

The English had at last planted their flag over the gold-reefed city of evil omen, and the consciences of the British were appeased in the knowledge that there was the solid advantage of the richest gold mines in the world on the side of the Union Jack, as a set off against the moral infamy of the war which this gold had provoked. The fruits of the crime were not to be lost, whatever might become of the honor of the Empire.

Inside Pretoria confusion grew more serious as the rapid retreat of the Boers from the Vaal had become known and it was found that the capital would not have to undergo the experience of a siege. This news emboldened the pro-British partisans, and a plot was set on foot to release the English officers still held as prisoners of war within the city, and, in conjunction with the 3,000 other prisoners at Waterval, to seize the arsenal and hold it until Roberts should arrive. There were still, however, enough of police and officials available to stop any such scheme being carried out, and this fact alone prevented the execution of the plot.

On the 29th of May President Kruger and other members of the Executive took their departure from the city eastward to Machadodorp, and the capital of the little Republic was left to its fate.

Three days later Louis Botha, covered with dust and borne down by fatigue, came to visit his wife and children from the lines beyond the boundary of hills, and to see to the proper despatch of such war materials as yet remained in the arsenal and other places. These

NEAR THE PRETORIA RAILWAY STATION

(One of the forts in the distance)

duties attended to, the Commandant-General was off again to the front, from whence the booming of guns and the shrieking of lyddite could be plainly heard in the town.

Guns, rifles, ammunition, provisions, rolling stock, everything removal within the city that would be useful for further operations were expeditiously sent forward on the Delagoa Bay railway; and the loyal and disloyal citizens awaited with conflicting hopes the advent of the final scene in the war drama around Pretoria.

Down from the gaps leading through the hills from the south came the retreating burghers in broken commandoes, all making their way eastward on the line of general retreat. Behind them could be heard the guns of the advancing British, and the procession continued through Sunday and Monday the 3rd and 4th of June. Attempts had been made by the enemy to send troops enough round by the north and south of the city to cut the railway line east of Pretoria so as to prevent the removal of heavy guns and stores by rail. Botha had, however, anticipated these movements, and in two spirited encounters, one against General French and the other against General Hamilton, the men he had posted to guard these positions had driven these enveloping forces back with loss, and left the railway clear for the final use to which it would be put in Pretoria in the service of the Boer Republic.

On the night of the 4th of June, Lord Roberts sent a staff officer under a flag of truce to Commandant-General Botha demanding the surrender of the capital. The reply was returned that the English could take possession the next morning, and Adjutant Sandberg, General Botha's military secretary, and another officer were commissioned to convey to Lord Roberts the intimation that he could enter the Transvaal capital on that day.

The Boer officers and men who had no secure rest since leaving Kroonstad slept in what was to be the capital of the Republic for that night only, and early the following morning, the 5th of June, Louis Botha and Lukas Meyer bade farewell to their families, vaulted into their saddles, and followed in the rear of the still retreating Boer columns, eastward out of Pretoria, as the British were entering the city through the southern gap in the circle of surrounding hills.

Louis Botha's last words on leaving the city thus violated again, after twenty years of freedom, by the entry of the British flag, were, "We will fight them to the death!"

Chapter XXXV

MAFEKING AND ELANDS RIVER

How Mafeking was finally relieved—Exploits of some Australian "Bushmen" under General Carrington—British opinions not flattering to British valor.

THE end of the military theatricals carried on by Baden-Powell and Commandant Snyman came on the 17th of May, in a way which tended to redeem the farcical character of the previous operations from a continuous record of absurdity. Two forces started for the town from Kimberley and Johannesburg, respectively—one to relieve, the other to storm, the much-advertised place. Colonel Mahon, at the head of 1,000 picked and mounted men, and with a battery of Horse Artillery, rode north from Kimberley, by Vryburg, and formed a junction with Colonel Plumer and the troopers who had been attempting in vain for months to get past the few Boers who carried on the siege. This was to be the rescuing force.

At midnight, on the 8th of May, a select body of 380 Rand and Pretoria Volunteers left Johannesburg under the command of young Eloff, a nephew of President Kruger's, with the purpose of reaching Mafeking before the relieving force from Kimberley could arrive. It was to be a race between the two flying columns for the prize of Baden-Powell's garrison. Eloff—that is, Sarel, of that name—was a brave young burgher and, unlike others of his name, was very popular in Pretoria. He had offered to go and storm Mafeking if 300 men could be found in Pretoria and Johannesburg at that time to accompany him. The necessary number were soon mustered, and comprised some German Uitlanders; but the bulk of the men were burghers.

Eloff reached the Boer lines round Mafeking early on the 13th of May, and proposed his plan of assault to General Snyman. This officer refused point blank to entertain the proposition. He was senior in command, and, unless Eloff could produce President Kruger's own orders superseding him, he was resolved to remain superior in authority and to carry on the siege according to his and

his commandoes' ideas. Eloff was furious and, calling Snyman names which did not spell either "courage" or "white man," he resolved with his own brigade alone to attack the town forthwith.

Consequently, at eleven o'clock that night, Eloff at the head of his Volunteers left the lines of investment and rushed into the native location which had been one of the strongest posts in Baden-Powell's outer defenses. The place was successfully carried, and it was felt that the key of Mafeking was in Boer hands; providing that Snyman and the investing force of burghers who had witnessed the capture of the Kaffir kraals would now come on and help to push the advantage thus gained to an assault upon the town itself. They did not come.

Conflicting accounts are given of what followed the initial success of Eloff's attack. One report alleged that before the Volun-

BOER BATTERY OUTSIDE MAFEKING

teers had started to penetrate the outer British lines, a dozen of them turned their rifles upon some of Snyman's command and shot five or six of these for refusing to take part in the assault. Another account asserts that the Volunteers, after capturing the native quarters, overcome by the five or six days' almost continuous journey from Johannesburg, were borne down with fatigue and could not be induced by Eloff to push forward to the main attack; they favored waiting for the morning; while yet another report alleges that Eloff's men had found a drink-store in the Kaffir location and had unwisely indulged in the liquor, hence the collapse of the last attempt to capture the Mafeking garrison.

By whatever means, natural or spirituous, the attackers were induced to sleep in the Kaffir portion of the Mafeking lines, they were so found and overwhelmed shortly after midnight by Baden-Powell's forces. After a manly fight put up by the assailants they were defeated by their more numerous foes. They left ninety killed and wounded on the field, as a proof of the fighting resolve

which had animated those who had followed young Eloff, and as a lasting reproach to Baden-Powell's rival, Snyman, whose poltroonery alone stood between the Volunteers and the success of their plan of assault. Eloff and the balance of his men were taken prisoner, and Mafeking was finally relieved by Colonel Mahon and his troops four days subsequently.

It was found on the termination of the siege that the town was amply provisioned for six months' further investment, and that there had actually happened none of the hardships and little of the sensational siege experiences which had been persistently advertised in heart-rending but heroically posing despatches sent to all parts of the British Empire during the continuance of the serio-comic military drama at Mafeking.

General Carrington's achievements, in conjunction with those of General Baden-Powell soon after the siege was raised, have not been the theme of a too fervent Jingo praise. Carrington's force was composed of some 1,200 or 1,500 of "Australian Bushmen" and Rhodesian troopers. By an arrangement with the Portuguese Government which astonished all who understood that this Power had declared its neutrality, the Australian portion of these troops was permitted to land at Beira, with its horses, artillery, and equipment. The explanation given by English papers of this arrangement was that "a rising of the Matabele" was feared in Rhodesia, and that Carrington's force was being despatched thither by way of Beira, as any other approach through British territory was barred by the Boers. The real destination of the British was Mafeking, and its sole object an attempt to relieve that place from the north.

The "Bushmen," so-called, were the choicest lot of khaki-clad adventurers who had enlisted on the English side in the inglorious war. They were, with a few exceptions, Jackeroos, Sundowners, and similar ne'er-do-wells who had been "Bushmen" only in the sense of doing an occasional job of sheep-shearing which would provide drink for a fortnight's spree at the nearest liquor store. They enlisted at the rate of five shillings per day, while the regular British Atkins had to expose his skin in the field for about one-third of this remuneration. The "Bushmen" were therefore joining in a good thing when engaging to sustain the martial valor of Australia in South Africa, at the price of ten drinks per day.

How they have done this I will allow one of their chaplains, the late Father Timoney, of Sydney, N. S. W., to relate. This reverend gentleman accompanied these select Australian warriors as their spiritual guardian, and on the 10th of December, 1900, he wrote as follows of the prowess of his precious charges:

"A battle in South Africa means that two bodies of men strongly posted on two hills about a mile or two apart, throw lead in the form of shells and bullets at one another, until the guns become jammed or until the rifles become red hot, or nearly so. As a rule our casualties are few, but if one listens to the mendacious troopers the enemy has lost hundreds. There is, of course, no means of ascertaining the losses of the enemy. Now and then one can see through glasses a man fall from his horse, but the lively imagination of our men supplies all details, gives the precise number of the enemy killed, wounded, and missing, the nature of the wounds inflicted, and the number of those who are beyond recovery. It often happens that the enemy escapes without losing a man, but in our camp they invariably lose dozens. I have heard cooks, tailors, and other artists enumerate the number of Boers whom they had killed, and modestly refer to their deeds of valor. Most of these fellows would fail to strike a haystack at a hundred yards' distance, and a Boer armed with a broomstick would annihilate a company of such braggarts. Besides, these swaggering warriors live in mortal terror of the Boers, and it would require a Baldwin engine to drag them within range of the Mauser rifle. I am now referring to the noisy, rowdy element of our army, to the men who neither do nor dare anything, but who are ever gabbling overland recounting exploits that never took place. I suppose every army has its coterie of worthless individuals. Anyhow, we are singularly privileged in possessing large numbers of Munchausens. I marvel what will be the number and nature of the stories with which our doughty warriors will entertain their friends when they return to Australia!"—*Sydney (Australia) "Catholic Press."*

Following the occupation of Pretoria by Roberts and the relief of Mafeking by Mahon, General De la Rey, who had fought in the rear-guard of the Boer forces from Brandfort to the Transvaal capital, was despatched to his own district of Lichtenburg to rally the burghers of the west in a campaign against the operations of Lord Methuen and Baden-Powell, who had several thousand troops at their disposal. General Carrington's incomparable warriors from Woolamaroo, and elsewhere, were also swooping down upon the hen roosts and liquor stores of the Marico regions carrying fire and slaughter into the farmyards of the northwest of the Transvaal. De la Rey's task was to stand in between these three hostile columns, and to defend such homesteads and villages as had not been burned in the Rustenburg district by the British vandals.

He organized a force of 1,500 men out of the burghers who had been under Snyman's command, and placed that disgraced commandant in prison for cowardice. With this small force, he fought his assailants on all sides, more than holding his own against three

columns, in a series of brilliant encounters. He succeeded in shutting Baden-Powell (now a general) and 2,000 troops within Rustenburg, in August, 1900. By his usual display of military judgment, he had detached some of his men southward to harass Lord Methuen's march, and so well were these plans executed that the titled guardsman and his column of 3,000 men were successfully kept off during the investment of Baden-Powell in Rustenburg. Finally, the newly-made general was rescued by Hamilton with a large force despatched for the purpose by Lord Roberts from Pretoria, and his exploits since then have not been such as to bring him under the daily notice of the newspaper-reading world. He marched with his 2,000 men, when leaving Rustenburg, towards the Elands River where a body of Rhodesian and other troopers, under Colonel Hoare, were being assailed by the ubiquitous De la Rey. Baden-Powell knew that General Carrington and the invincible Woolamaroo Brigade were marching from Zeerust, directly west of Elands River, also to the relief of Hoare; but for some unexplained reason the defender of Mafeking, tho advancing until within earshot of the Boer guns, returned upon his footsteps, to emerge some months afterward from a too oppressive surfeit of military fame, and become the head of a special constabulary force, for, presumably, more civic duties.

It has been said, in explanation of General Baden-Powell's action on this occasion, that he believed General Carrington had joined hands with Colonel Hoare, and that his aid was not, in consequence, required. What Carrington and the "Bushmen" did on the occasion had better be related in the words of Jingo loyalty itself, so as to avert a possible charge of prejudiced testimony against this volume.

On the 1st of January, 1901, the London "Daily Chronicle" published the following statement:

"The 'Rhodesian Times,' just to hand, gives a full account of the failure to relieve the Elands River garrison and the subsequent evacuation of Zeerust by General Carrington, as told by several of the men serving in the Rhodesian regiment. They all reflect severely upon the action of the general. The 'Rhodesian Times,' referring to these statements, says :

"'The particular events narrated in the following columns are the gallant defense of Elands River by some 400 Rhodesians and Australians on Aug. 3 and succeeding days, together with the lamentable failure of General Carrington to relieve the post, and the shameful evacuation of Zeerust with the consequent breach of faith to surrendered neutrals and to British loyalists. This whole story has never been fully told before, and, in order that free and

fair statements might be obtained, each of the four who have contributed a statement has been interviewed separately, and had no idea that any one else had been consulted. There are, therefore, four independent accounts, each man telling all he could and believing he was telling the whole story. Mere hearsay statements have been eliminated as not being evidence, otherwise the accounts are in the narrators' own language. Yet the stories are practically identical, and it seems to be a fact that a British general, with a complete, well-equipped force of 1,200 men, suffered himself to be driven backward, fled in such haste that he never knew how weak his enemy was, and then evacuated a fortified defensible position thirty-six hours before the first small body of the enemy appeared. It is a pitiful tale; a shameful and disgraceful tale. It has caused the shedding of an infinite amount of blood, and prolonged misery to thousands, both of British and Boer families, by encouraging the Boers in their futile resistance. The only relief in the story so far as this country is concerned is the gallantry of the Rhodesians, who, under Captain "Sandy" Butters, declined to surrender, and with the cry, "Rhodesians never surrender," held the advanced post at Elands River, and made the defense of the whole camp possible, until Kitchener's welcome relief came."

The end of the operations of the Methuen-Powell-Carrington-Hoare forces in the west of the Transvaal, in the months of July and August, 1900, was the rescue of the lot by the arrival, first of General Hamilton, and then of Lord Kitchener, with large relieving columns, and the subsequent burning of hundreds of farms and homesteads and of numerous villages by the 8,000 or 10,000 British who had failed to beat or capture General De la Rey and his 1,500 burghers.

Chapter XXXVI

DIARY OF THE WAR—JUNE TO DECEMBER, 1900

De Wet's encounters—His capture of the Irish Loyalist Yeomanry at Lindley—De la Rey's victory at Nitral's Nek—Surrender of Prinsloo—An American Consul where he ought not to be—Early fruits of Lord Roberts' drastic policy—Burghers return to the commandoes—Burning a widow's home—Her retort—The Cordua "plot"—Battle of Dalmanutha—Lord Roberts annexes the Transvaal—Defeat of Ollivier—Correspondence between Roberts and Botha—Death of Theron—President Kruger sails for Europe—The British gain control of Delagoa Bay railway—The Foreign Volunteers return home—De Wet's policy adopted by all the Boers—De Wet escapes from a trap—Captures and recaptures—Is defeated at Bothaville—Disgraceful "rejoicings" at return of London Volunteers—Savage press sentiments in England—"Concentration" camps resolved upon—President Kruger lands in France—Lord Roberts relinquishes command to Kitchener and returns to England—De la Rey beats Clements at Nooitgedacht—"Punch's" diary of a week's achievements by the British—De Wet again baffles surrounding columns—Second Boer invasion of Cape Colony—Commandant Kritzinger—Botha captures and releases the oft-captured Liverpools—Kitchener's summary of the situation.

I RETURNED from South Africa at the end of May, 1900, and was thus cut off from communication with the Transvaal and Free State leaders in the field, and from other means of obtaining direct Boer information. The facts and incidents relating to the events recorded in this diary are derived mainly from sources of general knowledge, and are not included in the volume with a guaranty of accuracy, or on any authority other than that which attaches to ordinary public report carefully examined.

In condensing the narrative of conflicts and occurrences from the 1st of June, 1900, to the present date into the form of a Diary of the War, my desire is to give my readers a rough, consecutive record of the combats between the opposing forces, in the absence of such information as would enable me to continue the descriptive accounts of battles, as in previous chapters. Accurate knowledge is wanting of these more or less continuous engagements, and of other occurrences in South Africa since the English possessed themselves of all the channels of communication. They still enforce a rigorous

press and postal censorship, and only leave the Boers the opportunity offered by a chance message of giving to the public in Europe and America their own versions of victories or defeats, or of their enemies' methods of conducting the campaign.

The Boer history of the past two years, and of the struggle on to the end of the war, will be told by competent authority some day, and the following imperfect account of what has happened during that time must necessarily take the place, for the present, of the fuller and better authenticated record which has still to be written.

I omit mention of numerous small encounters between detached bodies, in which the casualties were too few to lend importance to such skirmishes.

CAPTAIN DAANIE THERON, THE GREAT BOER SCOUT

June 1-7.—Patrols of De Wet's, forming part of scattered commandoes, located some farm-burning Britishers in the locality of Ficksburg, O. F. S., and successfully ambushed them. Thirty surrendered.

De Wet captured a convoy at Vredefort Road, on its way to Heilbron. It consisted of 150 Highlanders who were escorting food and necessaries for General Colvile's army, in the northeast of the Free State. Fifty-five wagons and their contents were secured. The British attempted no resistance. An officer from De Wet, bearing a white flag, rode into the enemy's camp with a summons to surrender. They surrendered, were disarmed, and subsequently released.

Captain Daanie Theron and his scouting corps were attached to De Wet's commandoes while these were operating in the rear of Lord Roberts' march on Pretoria. It is a legend of the Free State laagers that the Highlanders who were captured on the 4th of June, had been piloted during a portion of their journey by a young lad, born in Kroonstad, of Scotch parents, who rode a bicycle and produced a pass bearing Lord Methuen's signature. The "lad" disappeared the night before the convoy fell into De Wet's hands.

The capture of the men of the Duke of Cambridge's Own 13th Imperial Yeomanry, and of the "Irish Hunt Corps" (so called from its select composition, since it comprised earls, landlords, judges' sons, and Belfast Orangemen), occurred as follows, on the 31st of May: It was the first adventure of this section of the Im-

perial Yeomanry Volunteers in the war. Their commanding officer was Colonel Spragge, and they were under orders to march from Kroonstad to Lindley, as a reenforcement for General Colvile's column. On arriving at their destination, it was found that Colvile had withdrawn from the town on that morning, following an engagement with a Boer commando, and had proceeded due north for Heilbron, a distance of some fifty miles.

While considering what course to take under these circumstances, it was discovered by Spragge that a Boer force had surrounded Lindley, and was about to attack the Duke's Own and the Belfast "huntsmen." The British officer disposed of his men in the way best calculated to enable them to defend themselves, and the first, and the last, fight of these Irish loyalists in the war began.

Accounts vary in the details of the struggle. I have been assured that not half-a-dozen burghers lost their lives in the conflict with the Yeos during the three days' running battle which ensued. Spragge retreated from the town after finding that his assailants were in possession of the hills which dominated it. He was pursued closely by De Wet and his men, and driven into a position where he was easily held by his adversary, until, on finding there were no reenforcements coming either from General Colvile in the north, or Lord Methuen, who was somewhere in the Kroonstad district, the corps uplifted the white flag and became De Wet's prisoners. Less than ten per cent. of them had been placed *hors de combat* in the three days' fight. Had they only held out for a few hours longer, Lord Methuen would have succeeded in reaching them from Kroonstad.

After being disarmed, the whole body of over 450 men was sent across towards the Natal border, under an armed guard of eight burghers.*

Two earls were among the surrendered Yeos.

On the 7th of July De Wet released all his prisoners, including the titled ones.

On the 6th of June a composite force of about 800 British were in charge of a huge quantity of stores, intended for Lord Roberts' army, near Roodeval, fifty miles north of Kroonstad. General Colvile's column was somewhere east, and Lord Methuen's immediately south, of this position. The Derbyshire Militia Regiment and other troops were in camp as a protection for the stores. During the night Commandant Nel, with a section of De Wet's forces, stole in between the two British columns, attacked the Militia at dawn, and finally captured the stores and ammunition. The Militia

* "The National (British) Review," January, 1901, p. 666.

fought well for four or five hours before hoisting the white flag. Over 400 surrendered.

June 8–15.—During the middle of June De Wet's activity was chiefly directed to the rear of Roberts' army, on the line of his communications, where Lord Methuen, with a large column, was defending these south of Kroonstad. By the exercise of his accustomed strategy, the Boer general enticed his opponent away north, in the direction of Heilbron, and, on Methuen walking into the snare, De Wet wheeled round and destroyed the railway for several miles between Smaldeel and Kroonstad, after which he successfully eluded the pursuit of the returning English column.

On the 12th Lord Roberts reported an engagement between his forces and those of General Botha eastward of Pretoria. He said: "The enemy fought with great determination, and held our cavalry on both flanks, but Hamilton caused the enemy to fall back on their second position eastward, which they are still holding." Botha was finally compelled to retire eastward, while Robert's forces returned to Pretoria.

On the same date, Lord Roberts addressed a letter to Commandant-General Botha advising him to give up the struggle, saying: "The British force under my command so greatly exceeds the Boer army in numbers that, tho the war may be prolonged for a few more weeks, there can be but one result."

On General Botha requesting that operations should cease all along the line of hostilities, during an armistice which would enable him to consult with other generals and the members of his Government, Lord Roberts refused this condition and the negotiations ended.

The British general's "few weeks" are now (March, 1902) ninety in number, and the war is not yet over.

June 16–23.—A portion of De Wet's commando attacked a train at Leeuw Spruit, north of Kroonstad, which, according to report, contained Lord Kitchener. The English general is said to have had a narrow escape from being captured. He sprang from his carriage, seized a horse, and rode to the nearest British camp. The attack on the train was made by Theron and his scouts.

Sixty miles south of this place another train was attacked at Zand River, and 2,000 mail bags intended for Roberts' army were destroyed. The burghers engaged in this exploit belonged to De Villier's command under Boerman.

June 24–30.—A convoy carrying stores for the English garrison at Lindley was assailed by some of De Wet's men, led by General Philip Botha. A spirited fight ensued, in which 15 British were killed and 50 wounded. The convoy fought its way out

of the encounter, however, and succeeded in reaching its destination.

July 1-7.—Lord Roberts despatched a combined cavalry and infantry force of near 10,000 men with thirty guns to operate against De Wet in the northeast of the Free State. Generals Hunter, Rundle, Clements, and Paget were in command of separate columns of this force. De Wet and Prinsloo fell back south before these divisions to Bethlehem, where they fought an engagement, and were compelled to retire still southward towards the Wittebergen Hills. General Prinsloo, who was in charge of the largest body of the Free State burghers at this time, made for the Brandwater region of these hills, close to the Basutoland border, where he allowed himself to be surrounded by Hunter's forces, now divided into six columns. De Wet and President Steyn, with 1,500 men and six guns, doubled back north, under cover of night, and successfully broke the encircling cordon—one of the objects being to draw off the pressure upon Prinsloo's position.

In the meantime, General Louis Botha with a force of 3,000 men fought an engagement with Colonel Mahon and General Hutton, in command of some 8,000 troops, at Bronkhorstspruit, near the sixth railway station, east of Pretoria. This fight was mainly one of artillery, and there were only a few casualties on both sides.

July 8-15.—On the 11th of July, a section of General De la Rey's commando, under Commandant Beyers, attacked General Smith-Dorrien and four British battalions with two guns, at Heckpoort, southwest of Pretoria, defeated them, and compelled them to retreat.

On the same date, a few days after General Buller had visited Lord Roberts at Pretoria, and the meeting of the two generals in the Transvaal capital had been duly acclaimed by the English war press as heralding, "the final conquest of the Republic," General De la Rey attacked another British force at Nitral's Nek, defeated them with a loss of over 300 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and captured two guns. This engagement was fought within eighteen miles of Pretoria. The place is on the Rustenburg road, where it crosses a branch of the Krokodil River, and some twenty-five miles north of Heckpoort. To the west of Nitral's Nek, a high kop dominates the lower ridges of the Magaliesberg Hills. It was from this elevation the Boers were able to locate the exact position of the enemy. They seized the heights above the English camp to the west, while a small cooperating body advanced from the opposite direction and occupied another hill in the early morning; both contingents opening fire simultaneously upon the surprised British.

They captured the enemy's guns and turned them upon the second position, which was ultimately stormed and taken.

The English forces consisted of five companies of the Lincolnshire Regiment, a squadron of the Scots Greys, and some men of the Royal Horse Artillery in charge of the guns. The fight lasted for some hours, and terminated in a complete victory for De la Rey's men; the British surrendering on finding their casualties increasing under the fire of their own guns in Boer hands.

On the same date a force of Dragoons, Hussars, and other regiments was attacked by Commandant Kemp at Waterval, nearer still to Pretoria, and defeated, the British retreating.

July 16–23.—General De Wet and President Steyn with a well-mounted flying column and a few light guns made for Lindley, pursued by General Broadwood, after having broken through Hunter's surrounding columns. Broadwood was joined in the pursuit by other officers and forces who were met on the route, and the combined Britishers got in touch with their foes on the 19th. De Wet divided his commando into two sections, placed one under Commandant Nel, and, agreeing with him upon a rendezvous west of the railway in the locality of Reitzburg, rode past Broadwood in the night-time, attacked and captured a convoy north of Kroonstad, and left his pursuers far behind. On reuniting with the other section of his force at a strong position near Reitzburg, De Wet awaited the approach of Broadwood to attack him, but this officer, on reconnoitering his opponent's preparations, refused to attack, and awaited reenforcements.

July 24–31.—In the meantime, Prinsloo remained hemmed in by General Hunter's surrounding forces in the Brandwater region. He surrendered his men, three guns and a million rounds of ammunition, on the 30th of July. General Ollivier, who had charge of the Rouxville commando, with whom there were a body of Cape Volunteers, rode through the British lines on the night previous, and got away north. The burghers who remained with Prinsloo numbered 3,500. It was the next largest surrender of Boers to that of Paardeberg, but, unlike Cronje's heroic combat, it possessed no redeeming feature, military or patriotic. It was an action worthy of Prinsloo's record in the war, which was barren of a single successful engagement, and replete with instances in which his discretion held no intercourse whatever with the soldierly instinct of the Boer.

It was believed in Boer circles in Europe that a large proportion of the burghers who were included in Prinsloo's surrender were non-combatants.

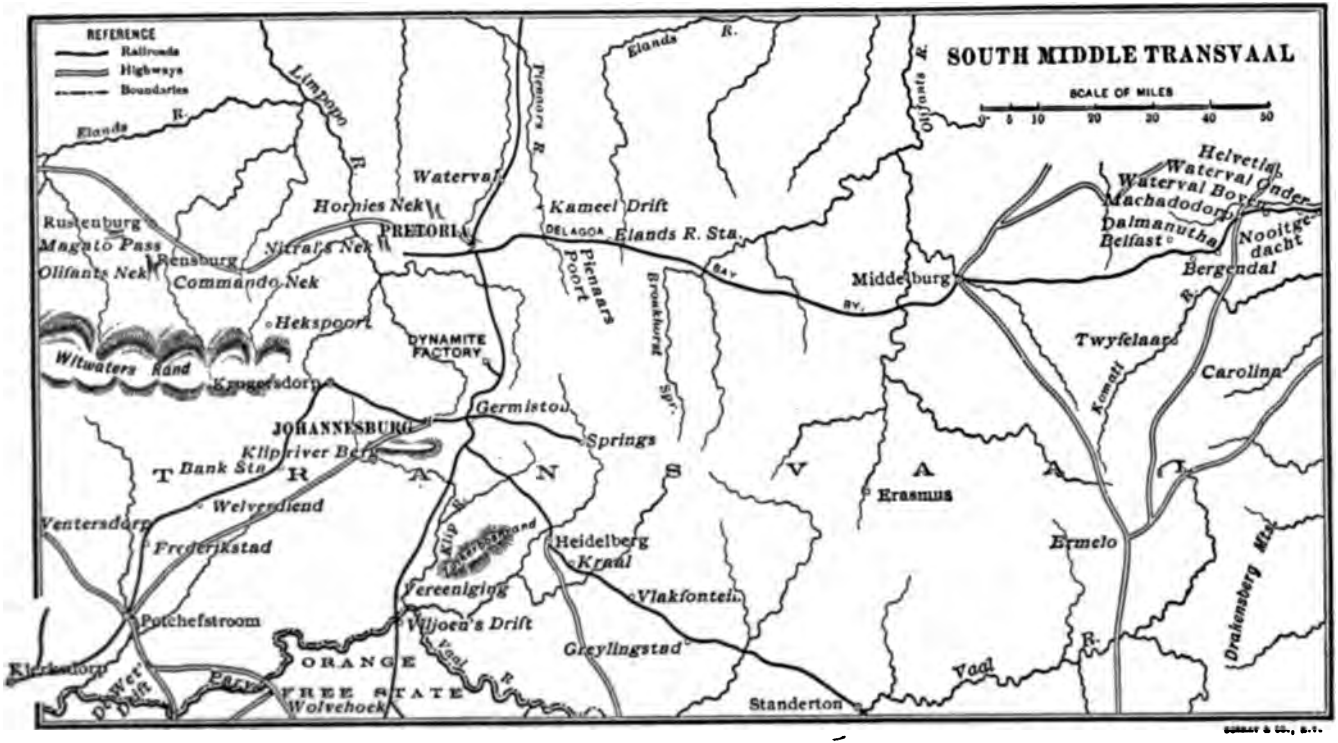
August 1–7.—A section of De la Rey's command was attacked

near the Magaliesberg range of hills, west of Pretoria, by General Hamilton. Forty English were killed and wounded in the engagement. The Boers retreated west; their casualties were not reported.

On the same date a train containing British soldiers and supplies was attacked south of Kroonstad by Theron and his scouts. The train was derailed, and 60 soldiers were made prisoners. It happened that Colonel Stowe, United States Consul at Cape Town, was traveling by the train. He flew the flag of the great Republic from his carriage window! The attack on the train was represented by the London press as "an outrage upon the American flag." The real outrage consisted in the United States flag being so used on such an occasion. That flag had no right to fly over an English train carrying armed troops, engaged in actual war against a country towards which Mr. Stowe's Government had, at least, professed the relations of neutrality.

During the months of July and August, reports from the theater of the war went to show that Boers who had given up the campaign after the capture of the Transvaal capital were returning again in considerable numbers to the fighting laagers. Lord Roberts' proclamations, and the treatment accorded to burghers who had gone home to their farms, were responsible for this renewed activity. "Unconditional surrender" was the English general's terms to men who had fought a valiant and unmatched combat for their country, while it was seen that those who had been induced to lay down their arms and to return to their homes, under promises not to be molested, were deprived of their horses as well as of weapons, and left unarmed and unprotected amidst the Kaffirs of districts which the war had largely thinned of their white inhabitants.

A wiser and a more chivalrous policy on the part of the British after the surrender of Pretoria; a policy which, while asserting England's predominancy in South Africa as a result of the war, would have remembered and acted upon Lord Salisbury's public declaration, "that England was seeking neither territory nor gold mines" in the hostilities against the Transvaal, but the vindication of those rights and claims which his Government had proclaimed to be the sole purpose of their armed interference in the internal affairs of the Republic; this would have ended the conflict with political credit to the victors in the struggle, and without embittering Boer national feeling. Public opinion everywhere would have acclaimed such a policy as just, prudent, and humane. England failed to rise to the level of such an attitude of national manliness. Roberts' terms were, instead, those which a victorious English army has ever imposed upon a weak foe. But, in this instance, the grave and costly mistake was made of considering the Boers as being beaten


SOUTH MIDDLE TRANSVAAL
REFERENCE
Railroads
Highways
Boundaries
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
Elands R.
Limpopo R.
Pienaars R.
Olifants R.
Waterval
Hornies Nek
PRETORIA
Kameel Drift
DELAGOA BAY RY.
Elands R. Sta.
Pienaars Poort
Brookhorst Spr.
Middelburg
Helvetia
Waterval Onder
Waterval Boven
Machadodorp
Dalmanutha
Belfast
Nooitgedacht
Bergendal
Rustenburg
Magato Pass
Olifants Nek
Rensburg
Nitral's Nek
Commando Nek
Hekspoort
DYNAMITE FACTORY
Witwaters Rand
Krugersdorp
Germiston
JOHANNESBURG
Springs
Klipriver Berg
Bank Sta.
T R A N S V A A L
Welverdiend
Ventersdorp
Frederikstad
Klip R.
Heidelberg
Kraal
Vereeniging
Vlakfontein
Potchefstroom
Viljoen's Drift
Greylingstad
Klerksdorp
De Wet Drift
Parys
ORANGE FREE STATE
Wolvehoek
Vaal R.
Standerton
Erasmus
Ermelo
Twyfelaar
Komati R.
Carolina
Drakensberg Mts.

when they had lost only their capital and the railway lines held by the British, while seven-tenths of the Transvaal were still virtually in their possession. The British blundered brutally, and they were destined in consequence to pay for their revenge to an extent and in a manner of which they had no thought when loudly acclaiming their already dearly-purchased triumph in the capital of the little Republic.

One of the most stupidly vindictive measures that was ever adopted to put down resistance on the part of a spirited adversary was Lord Roberts' orders that, wherever a railway track was injured or a train fired upon, the farms for a radius of ten miles were to be burned. The railways were practically the only means of transport and communications for the British armies with their base at Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth, and this being so, no more legitimate acts of warfare could be carried out than attacks upon these most vulnerable lines behind the enemy's advance. The spirit and letter of the code of civilized warfare were specifically and audaciously violated in such orders, and the law of a savage, vindictive vandalism substituted, by the British generalissimo.

One of these English decrees was being put in force by some troops between Heidelberg and Standerton in the Transvaal, when the lady who occupied one of the farms doomed to the flames asked the officer who had notified her of the fate of her home, why this deed was to be done?

"It is Lord Roberts' orders, Madam."

"But what have I, a widow, done to have my children's home burned?"

"The railway has been torn up a few miles away, and——"

"But, surely," replied the woman, "if Lord Roberts and 150,000 British soldiers cannot protect the railway, a widow and her children cannot be expected to prevent its being injured?"

During the month of August Lord Roberts added a little variety to his daily reports to England by detailing an account of an alleged Boer plot to kidnap himself. This feat was to be performed, it appears, inside of Pretoria, with a British army of occupation all round.

The instrument of the "plot" turned out to be a dissipated young Uitlander, who had served in the Transvaal Artillery. His name was Cordua. He was to seize Lord Roberts, on a convenient opportunity, and carry him off through the English lines to those of General Botha! This was the English story of the precious plot. When the facts leaked out, it transpired that the whole scheme, in its invention and purpose, was the work of an English agent-provocateur, named Gano, who had found a convenient tool in Cordua for

the construction of the sensational "conspiracy" in which Cordua was to be the principal and victim, and Gano the vigilant and well-rewarded agent who discovered the contemplated "crime."

Cordua was court-martialed, found guilty on the evidence of Gano, and, with Lord Roberts' approval, shot within the precincts of Pretoria Jail.

The entire German press denounced this act as brutal and unnecessary. The "Vossische Zeitung" voiced the views of its contemporaries in saying: "It is another hateful incident of a war brimful of hateful incidents. Cordua was a man quite irresponsible; the mere creature of a British agent-provocateur."

As recorded in a previous chapter, General De la Rey with a relatively small force, had conducted a brilliant campaign west of Pretoria, after his victory at Nitral's Nek in June, and Lord Roberts had to despatch a large number of troops under General Ian Hamilton to extricate Baden-Powell from Rustenburg, and to rescue other British garrisons which the indomitable Lichtenburger and his splendid commando had driven into defensive positions. By the middle of August, De la Rey had beaten three such garrisons into a retreat and compelled Generals Hamilton and Baden-Powell to retire to the shelter of greater British forces nearer Pretoria. General Carrington with his incomparable Australian "Bushmen" and Yeomanry found safety in what is believed to have been the swiftest running performance on record in the war. He reached a refuge in Mafeking. Methuen, Carrington, Baden-Powell, and the relieving column under Ian Hamilton, thus gave De la Rey, for a time, the wide berth of the entire Rustenburg and Zeerust districts where his effective force was estimated to be from 1,500 to 2,000 only. Finally, Lord Kitchener and a strong force had to be despatched to Elands River to rescue Colonel Hoare and his garrison of Rhodesians and Yeomen, whom Carrington and Baden-Powell had, as related, left to their fate. Hoare had made a gallant defense before his rescue.

Concurrently with these events, the little army of the Tugela under Christian Botha and Lukas Meyer had retired before General Buller, evacuating Natal and falling back through the southeast of the Transvaal, in line with General Louis Botha's retreat eastward along the Delagoa Bay railway. There was very little fighting during the carrying out of this movement.

After bringing his forces to Laing's Nek, General Buller sought an interview (in June) with General Christian Botha, which was granted. He appealed to the Boer officer to give up the struggle, which was now hopeless for the Transvaal, adding: "If the war goes on the Boers' homes would be destroyed and their property would

suffer a great deal of damage." (South African War Despatches, Vol. II., p. 85.) The Boer general replied, that the Boers would only lay down their arms on being guaranteed their independence. General Buller wired to Lord Roberts for an answer to the questions asked by Christian Botha, and received the reply: "My terms with the Transvaal Government are unconditional surrender."

In his report to Lord Roberts of this interview, General Buller said: "I have in front of me about half the Transvaal forces now in the field" (p. 87).

Near the end of July President Steyn, who was with De Wet at Reitzburg, in the Free State due south of Potchefstroom, resolved upon crossing into the Transvaal for a conference with Generals Louis Botha and De la Rey and the members of the South African Republic. The British forces which attempted to prevent this movement were two cavalry and two infantry columns, south of the river, under Generals Knox, Hart, and Ridley. On the north side, Lord Methuen and General Smith-Dorrien barred the way, with other columns, while Lord Kitchener was in chief command of all the surrounding, pursuing, and hemming-in forces. De Wet not only crossed the big river in safety, but selected a drift for the passage called by his own name, and rode past the Kitchener barriers, making for Rustenburg; while his lieutenant, Commandant Nel, held the enemy at bay near Frederickstad. Near the former town, De Wet had an interview with De la Rey. In cool contempt for all his pursuers, he then rode eastward to within twenty miles of Pretoria, and, learning that Baden-Powell, who had been rescued shortly before from De la Rey by Ian Hamilton, was near by, he wrote him a letter, summoning him to surrender. After this joke at the expense of the lords and generals who were on his track, he directed his course northeast of Pretoria, and, with a small escort only, succeeded in reaching the place where it had been arranged that President Steyn was to have his conference with the Transvaal leaders.

By the end of the month all the generals who had been engaged in the task of surrounding De Wet, arrived in Pretoria with the tidings of their failure.

Of all the numberless achievements which will immortalize this great Boer general in military annals and romance, probably no one of them will be found to surpass in brilliancy of dash, in consummate soldierly tact, courage, and resource, this running fight between 1,500 Boers and the columns and bundles of generals whom De Wet virtually conducted, in the carrying out of his purpose, for fully 200 miles, from the borders of Basutoland almost to Lord Roberts' headquarters in Pretoria.

General Ollivier, who also broke away from Prinsloo's surrounded commandoes on the 30th of July, on the 27th of August attacked Winburg, held by General Bruce Hamilton. The Boer general was defeated and captured along with three of his sons who fought by his side. It was Ollivier who was mainly instrumental in defeating General Gatacre at Stormberg, on the 10th of December, 1899.

August 23–30.—On the failure of Lord Roberts' plan to capture De Wet or to prevent his entering the Transvaal, the British Commander-in-Chief moved all his available forces east to Belfast, on the Delagoa Bay line; Botha having fallen back beyond this point from Middelburg. General Buller had advanced in the wake of Christian Botha's force, parallel with the line of Lord Roberts' movement, so that the two British armies were in touch near Belfast, while Louis Botha's old commandoes, now under his brother, were able to cooperate with the burghers whom the Commandant-General had led from the Vaal River to Dalmanutha.

The British force in men and guns (26,300 men and 131 guns) enabled Lord Roberts easily to outflank the slender line of opposition which Botha had to extend fully twenty miles from the Zwarts Kopjes, on the mountain road to Lydenburg, south to a hill at Bergendal, on the Delagoa Bay railway. This hill was held by no more than 100 of the renowned "Zarps," or Johannesburg Police, under Lieutenants Pohlman and Van der Merwe; the former having been one of the Boer officers who captured the ten British guns at Colenso. The small police force formed the left wing of the Boer lines with a solitary pom-pom, while the Commandant-General and Ben Viljoen, with the bulk of the commandoes, held the ground north to where the "Black Hills" overlooked the alpine roadway which led to Lydenburg.

The fight continued for the greater part of three days, and ended in a successful attack upon the ridge at Bergendal held by the Rand Police. General French had succeeded in turning Botha's right, while General Buller had carried out a similar movement against his left, and then turned his twenty guns upon the hill held by the Zarps. A counter attack in support of the Police was made by Captain Pretorius with a Long Tom and a fifteen-pound Creusot, from a hill some 8,000 yards away. The Police and their artillery support held the hill at Bergendal against all asaults for the greater part of Sunday, but had finally to cede to the overwhelming fire of the enemy's guns. In vacating the hill the Zarps suffered severely, losing more men in the retreat from the position so long and so heroically held than during the whole time they had fought against such overwhelming odds to retain it. Lieutenants Pohl-

man and Van der Merwe were killed, along with about twenty of their gallant corps.

Following up the retiring Boers from Dalmanutha, a section of Buller's force, composed of the Liverpool Regiment, were ambushed in a hollow among the hills by Botha's rear-guard, and decimated.

September 1-7.—Lord Roberts issued a proclamation annexing the Transvaal. This easy conquest was effected in the following terms:

"Belfast, September 1st: Under the provisions of Her Majesty's warrant, dated July 4, 1900, I have this day issued a proclamation announcing that the Transvaal will henceforth form part of Her Majesty's dominions.

"ROBERTS."

At the date when this Chinese Mandarin method of beating an enemy was put in force the British troops held about one-tenth of the territory of the Transvaal.

That a general who could so easily conquer his enemies, on paper, should next find fault with their system of fighting was natural and to be expected. The correspondence between Lord Roberts and General Botha on this head—the unsoldierly threats of the Briton side by side with the gentlemanly and dignified attitude of the Boer—is so typical of the spirit in which the war has been conducted on both sides, and so illustrative of the moral and martial differences of the two races, that the letters cannot be omitted from this diary.

The British Commander-in-Chief wrote as follows:

"Army Headquarters, South Africa.
"Sept. 2, 1900.

"Sir: First—I have the honor to address Your Honor regarding the operations of these comparatively small bands of armed Boers who conceal themselves in the railway, thus endangering the lives of passengers traveling by train, who may or may not be combatants.

"Second—My reason for again referring to the subject is that except in the districts occupied by the army under the personal command of Your Honor there is now no large body of Boer troops in the Transvaal or Orange River Colony, and that the war is degenerating into operations carried out by irregular and irresponsible guerrillas. This would be so ruinous to the country and so deplorable from every point of view that I feel bound to do everything in my power to prevent it.

"Third—The orders I have at present issued to give effect to these views are that the farm nearest the scene of any attempt to injure the line or wreck a train is to be burnt, and that all farms

within a radius of ten miles are to be completely cleared of all their stock, supplies, etc.

"Fourth—In connection with the foregoing the time has now come when I must refer again to my communication of the 5th of August, 1900, to which letter Your Honor replied on the 15th of August. I feel that when once the war has entered into the stage of irregular or guerrilla fighting I should not be doing my duty towards the national interests if I continued to permit the families of those who are fighting against us to remain in towns guarded by us. This is not now a question of supply so much as one of policy and of securing ourselves against the transmission of intelligence to our enemies. I should esteem it a favor, therefore, if Your Honor would warn all burghers or command those who have their families living in districts under the control of our troops to make early preparations for their reception and accommodation. The removal of these families will commence in a few days, those at Pretoria being the first sent. They will proceed by rail to the British outposts and there be made over to any one Your Honor may depute to receive them.

"I will keep Your Honor informed of the number to expect day by day and I will take this opportunity of informing you that, as nearly all the passenger vehicles belonging to the Netherlands Railway Company have been removed eastward, the families must, I regret to say, travel in trucks, for the most part open ones. I will endeavor to provide Mrs. Kruger, Mrs. Botha and as many other ladies as possible with closed carriages, but I am not sure that I shall succeed in finding any. I would suggest that Your Honor should send suitable accommodations for them. I need not say how distasteful this measure is to me, but it is forced upon me by the apparent determination of you and your burghers to continue the war after all doubt as to its ultimate issue has ceased. I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

"ROBERTS, Field Marshal, Commanding in South Africa.

"To his Honor, Commandant-General Louis Botha."

To this letter the head of the Boer army replied as follows:

"Commissariat Camp, Sept. 4, 1900.

"To Lord Roberts, Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the British Troops in South Africa:

"Your Excellency—In reply to your Excellency's letter of the 2nd I have the honor to make the following reply, to wit: Considering that our military forces are very small in comparison to those of your army, it can naturally not be expected to find large commandoes of Boers everywhere in the field, and therefore it stands to reason that whatever was expected from our side was to be accomplished by small bodies (commandoes), as throughout the whole course of the war and even now we are still compelled to cut our forces up into small bodies in order to resist the robbing patrols

under Your Excellency's command, who ravage the country and carry away stock and provisions from the various homesteads.

"Second—With regard to your contention that there exists no regular body of war forces except those under my personal command, I deny emphatically any such statement, since our military troops are still divided and controlled on the same basis as in the beginning of the war according to the laws of the country.

"Third—With regard to article 3 of your letter now under consideration, I am already cognizant of the fact that similar barbarous acts were perpetrated by troops under your command, and that not only near or along railway lines, but also far away.

"Whenever your troops moved about, not only houses were burned down or blown up with dynamite, but also helpless women and children were driven from their homes and deprived of food and clothing without the slightest ground for any such deed.

"Fourth—With regard to article 4 of your letter now under consideration, I sincerely regret to see that the determination of me and my burghers to persevere in the strike for our independence will be avenged by you on our wives and children. Since it is the first instance of this kind known to men in the history of civilized warfare nothing else remains for me to do but to protest against your proposed intentions, it being against the principles of civilized warfare and extremely cruel to women and children.

"It is especially cruel in the case of aged women were it with regard to the wife of His Honor, the State President, who, as you must be aware, cannot travel without fear of losing her life, and it would simply mean a murder to force her to travel thus. The pretext mentioned by you, viz., that by such action you wish to protect yourself against any information being brought over to us, is doubtless a delusion, since such precaution was not deemed necessary by you when our troops were in immediate vicinity of Pretoria. It is unnecessary to add that we have never received any information through women and children with regard to military operations.

"Fifth—In case Your Excellency persists in carrying out your plans, which I trust will not be the case, I request Your Excellency to give me notice in time of date and particulars of their expulsion, as I intend to take steps to send the families on to Europe.

"Referring to Your Excellency's remark concerning accommodation for the families, I am prepared to send, for the sake of their convenience, cars to any place mentioned by Your Excellency, as also machines for the line between Watervaal Biven and Watervaal Bridge, provided that Your Excellency guarantees the safe return of such cars and machines.

"Sixth—In conclusion, I wish to state that nothing done by you to our women and children will prevent us from continuing the war for our independence. I have the honor to be,

"LOUIS BOTHA, Commandant-General."

During the latter part of August (and the whole of September) the entire western Transvaal, from Krugersdorp to Mafeking and from the Vaal River to Zeerust, was swept by Generals Lord Methuen, Hart, Douglas, Cunningham, Clements, and Broadwood, and as many columns. It was impossible for De la Rey's slender force to make any successful stand against such numbers, and he accordingly avoided an encounter. His commando was split into a dozen small sections, and these hung upon the flanks of the seven or eight columns of the enemy, and harassed them considerably. The English (especially the troops under Lord Methuen) burned numerous villages and farms, seized great numbers of cattle, and created much devastation.

Early in September Captain Daanie Theron was killed near the town in which he had spent his boyhood, and from whence he had organized his corps of matchless scouts. He had attempted, with a handful of men, to cut the water-main which supplied Johannesburg; advancing within ten miles of that unsavory city for the purpose. He was discovered and attacked by General Hart, and retreated on Krugersdorp, closely followed by the English. On the 7th, during a skirmish near this place, the man who had lured so many convoys into Boer hands, held up so many trains, and had successfully scouted for De Wet, met a soldier's death. He lies buried near the town, which has probably contributed more heroes to the war than any other town in the two Republics. His grave, if the enemy gave him one, will be a future landmark of which Krugersdorp will be proud. His fame will never die while Boer memories recall the triumphs and dangers, the perils and adventures of the greatest war fought by their race. What fact will not furnish from his wonderfully daring exploits and consummate ruses against the Rooineks, legend and the pen of romance will weave round the name and genial character, the boyish heroism, and manly deeds of Daanie Theron.

September 8–15.—General Louis Botha fell back to Lydenburg before the British advance, and again moved north as the enemy appeared before that town. The evident purpose of the Boer general was to entice his foes further into the alpine fastnesses of the Zoutpansberg regions, where the climate and the defiles would greatly favor plans of Boer resistance. Roberts, however, recalled Buller from further pursuit, and the campaign for the possession of the Delagoa Bay railway was brought to an end in the occupation of Nelspruit by the English, and in the resolve of President Kruger to remove into Portuguese territory with the view of sailing for Europe from Lourenzo Marquez.

This step was pressed upon Mr. Kruger by Commandant-General

Botha, and approved by President Steyn. It was obvious that it would be very difficult to guard and protect the old President in a campaign, such as would henceforth become necessary, of small commandoes and swift movements. It was likewise felt that a visit to Europe by the head of the South African Republic would accentuate interest in the no-surrender phase of the Boer struggle. General Schalk Burger was appointed President of the Transvaal, pro tem, and, all due arrangements having been made, Mr. Kruger sailed for Marseilles in a Dutch warship specially, and significantly, placed at his disposal by the young Queen of Holland.

GENERAL SCHALK BURGER

September 16–23.—The complete control of the railway connecting the Transvaal with Lourenzo Marquez gave the British the great advantage of thereby cutting off, except in smuggling operations, all Boer access to the sea. This meant the loss of possible help in ammunition from European sources, and innumerable other deprivations. It marked the close of large operations on the part of the Boer commandoes in the field, and the commencement of the general plan of fighting which De Wet had carried on so successfully in the Free State since the British occupation of Bloemfontein. Henceforth ammunition would have to be used only in actual combat, and sparingly, while the large guns would have to be buried or destroyed. Two of the "Long Toms" which were such conspicuous actors in the siege of Ladysmith were destroyed near Komatipoort, while other artillery which had been captured from the English were buried or rendered useless. Roberts did not succeed in capturing a single Boer gun from Pretoria to the Portuguese border.

The few hundred foreign volunteers who had been with General Botha crossed the Portuguese frontier, and surrendered to the officials of that country. These volunteers included most of those I have given an account of in Chapter XXVI. Their usefulness in the field, in a campaign like that of De Wet's, would be handicapped by their ignorance of the country and of its language and, especially,

by their deficiency in those qualities of endurance and horsemanship which the requirements of such methods of fighting imperatively demanded. They were dismissed with expressions of grateful appreciation for their services by General Botha and State Secretary Reitz, and they ultimately reached their destinations in Europe and America.

Colonel Blake and a few of his men remained behind for special work, and they are still serving the Boer cause in the field. So likewise did a few German and Dutch volunteers.

September 24–30.—These changes in the military situation called for another of Lord Roberts' series of proclamations scolding the Boers for persisting in the struggle, and threatening them with those extra pains and penalties, not yet inflicted, which English armies seldom fail to fall back upon in British warfare. These menaces did not, however, accomplish what an army of 200,000 British troops had not yet succeeded in doing. It was also industriously circulated by all kinds of agencies that General Botha had resigned and given up the struggle.

October 1–7.—A counter proclamation was issued by the Commandant-General on the 6th of October, in the following terms:

"Whereas I have been informed that the enemy circulates all sorts of wrong and lying reports among the burghers, about the Government and myself, our officers and officials are charged to communicate the following information to the general public, and wherever telegraph offices are in working order to wire to all offices that can be reached.

"The Executive Council, after consulting his Honor the State President of the Orange Free State, has decided, in the interests of our cause, to give leave of absence to our State President with the order to go immediately to Europe in order to assist our deputation there in the work they have before them.

"The Vice-President, Mr. Schalk Burger, has been sworn in according to the law, and is now Acting State President. He is assisted by the State Secretary and two members of the Executive Council, Mr. Lukas Meyer and myself, as well as the Assistant State Solicitor and other officials.

"In short, our Government exists still in the same way as before and is now in my immediate neighborhood and in direct communication with me.

"The news given out by the enemy that I have resigned is absolutely untrue. To-day I arrived at the Roosenekal, and I hope to visit at an early date all the commandoes personally.

"I trust that the burghers will not believe those false reports, as they are merely given out to insult our burghers, and to try, in a deceiving manner, to make them act against their duties as

citizens; so be warned, and continue the struggle that has already taken so many dear victims from us.

"Let the blood of our brave dead always be a strong voice inducing every burgher to fight for real liberty. We have nothing left to lose, but everything to win. The Government has most firmly decided to continue the struggle, and I am convinced that our burghers will applaud this decision, and act accordingly until the end.

"The burghers are also warned against fine words used by the enemy to deceive them so as to make them put down their arms, because, according to the proclamation of Lord Roberts, they will all be transported to St. Helena or Ceylon as prisoners of war, and they put their property, as it were, between two dangers, for in future I will deal severely with all property of those who put down their arms.

"LOUIS BOTHA,
"Commanding General.

"Roosenekal, 6 Oct., 1900.

"Printing office of the Zoutpansberg 'Wachter,' Pietersberg, S. A. R."

October 8–15.—On returning to the scenes of his many previous operations, De Wet recommenced, in the districts around Senekal, his usual tactics, worrying the enemy's flying columns, attacking patrols, and picking up straggling convoys as usual. Early in September he captured a train near Kroonstad with forty-four cars laden with supplies. His reorganized commandoes were divided into four divisions, under himself, General Philip Botha, and Commandants Nel and Haasbroek. While acting on lines of sectional independence these forces were in constant touch with the Chief Commandant, and were always ready to cooperate in any of his larger plans.

Jagersfontein, in the south of the Free State, which was held at the time by a strong British garrison, was attacked by Commandant Visser and a few men near the end of October. Some fifty Boers entered the town during the night unobserved, and at daybreak the following morning opened an attack upon the garrison in conjunction with the main body under Visser from the south of the village. The English held their ground during a three hours' fight, when Visser withdrew, leaving a dozen of his men prisoners. He returned again the same night, stormed the town, released the prisoners, but was himself killed in retiring again from the place.

The English garrisons in Jacobsdal, Fauresmith, Koffyfontein, and Philippolis, all in the south of the Free State, were attacked by small commandoes about this time. The former place was cap-

tured by Commandant Bosman who was killed in the fight, but the town was subsequently retaken by a larger British force.

Philippolis underwent a week's siege; armed Kaffirs being con-

GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA

spicuously employed in the fighting by the British garrison. Commandant Scheepers, a youthful Boer leader, led the attacks on the place. He captured some reenforcements sent to relieve the garrison, but was finally driven off by the arrival of larger bodies of the enemy.

The British garrison at Reddersburg, the place where General De Wet had fought and taken near 500 prisoners in April, was captured. There were only thirty men in the second Reddersburg garrison, and as they made no resistance to the 250 Boers who surprised them, they were released after being disarmed. The Boers were led by Brand and Hertzog.

A fight occurred in the west of the Free State, near Hoopstad, between a party of De Villiers' commando and the escort of a convoy under Major-General Settle and Colonial troops. The Boers were beaten off in the first assault, but renewed the attack again, and pressed it so rigorously that the British, who were a body of mounted Colonials, retreated, abandoning two Maxim guns and the greater part of the convoy to their assailants.

Attacks upon railways were renewed in Natal during this month; a party of Boers tearing up the line within a few miles of Ladysmith.

October, 1900, being the anniversary of the war, the Boers were resolved to give Lord Roberts' declaration that the war was virtually ended the most objective contradiction in fully fifty instances of combative activity. In the whole of the Free State fighting was forced by numerous small commandoes, many of them led by new officers. In the west of the Transvaal, De la Rey's men appeared in a dozen centers, and showed that the British only held the few towns in which they had placed garrisons.

In the southeast of the Transvaal, it was found necessary by Lord Roberts to recall General French from the Free State, and send him with a large column to deal with the Boer forces under General Christian Botha, in the Ermelo and Carolina districts. French was harassed all along his march by Botha's men, who, divided into small bodies, hung on the flanks and rear of the enemy until he reached Heidelberg. French's captures were chiefly confined to non-combatants, and to sheep and cattle.

French's column had not yet reached Heidelberg before General Ben Viljoen, with a section of Commandant-General Botha's men, threatened the enemy's posts at Machadodorp, east of Belfast. A body of British sent to attack Viljoen were driven back. General Smith-Dorrien arrived with reenforcements, but was so fiercely attacked in turn that he was compelled to retreat back to Belfast; the Boers charging into his rear-guard, capturing a number of Canadians and killing and wounding several of their foes.

Viljoen's success on this occasion was dearly bought in the death of Commandant Fourie, of the Middelburg burghers, one of the very bravest of the many valiant men whom this war has revealed to an admiring world. He had fought with great distinction at

Colenso and in all the Tugela battles, while his defense of the Boer lines against Buller's forces in the British advance for the final relief of Ladysmith merited the high praise which General Botha bestowed upon his resourceful daring on that occasion.

October 16–23.—De Wet's operations between Lindley and Kroonstad, in the early part of October, forced Lord Roberts to organize another "sweeping" movement for his capture. Four columns of mounted men under Knox, Dalgetty, De Lisle, and Porter were despatched to surround the Boer general at Heilbron, in the north of the Free State, where scouts had located him. A circle some thirty miles in diameter was formed round the town, and it was deemed almost impossible for the cornered quarry to escape this time. On drawing the British lines closer, an engagement began which lasted for the greater part of two days. De Wet fought a determined battle with his would-be captors, and then, extricating himself out of the elaborately planned trap, he retired during the night to the northwest, and crossed the Vaal River near the very drift over which he had conducted President Steyn in the middle of August. His object now was to meet the President on his return journey from the visit he had paid to General Botha and the Transvaal Government. Steyn was accompanied by Botha and a small escort from the Nylstroom district, north of Pretoria, to the Rustenburg district, in the west, in which a conference was held with De la Rey. The President was then escorted by De la Rey's scouts south to the Vaal River, west of Klerksdorp, from whence he was to communicate with De Wet.

It may be mentioned here that it was during the visit of the Free State President to Generals Botha, Schalk Burger, and Dr. Reitz that the second systematic invasion of the Cape Colony was resolved upon. The object was twofold: To retaliate for the farm-burning and general vandalism of the enemy in the west and south-east of the Transvaal, and in the north and east of the Free State, and for the more important purpose of showing the world that the Republics were able, despite Lord Roberts' assertions, to hold the greater portion of the Transvaal and Free State, and to invade British territory as well. The plan was Mr. Steyn's, and was, in both a political and military sense, worthy of the great moral leader of the Boer nation in its unequaled fight against destruction.

De Wet encountered General Barton and a large force some seventy miles south of Johannesburg, on the 20th, when the enemy had the worst of the encounter. Generals Knox, De Lisle, and other officers from whom De Wet had broken away at Heilbron, arrived with reenforcements for Barton, when a fierce fight followed; the casualties being about equal on both sides. De Wet retired west-

ward during the night, having learned of the direction in which President Steyn was retracing his course back to the Free State.

November 1-7.—Now began on the part of the enemy a similar effort to that of August to capture the President and the Chief Commandant at the Vaal River. All the drifts east and west of their supposed location on the north bank were blocked by many men and guns. Generals and columns were to the right of them, left, north, and south; De Wet having, all told, 800 men only. A running fight was kept up for three days but, despite the number of his pursuers, he succeeded in crossing the river. Large forces were, however, encountered on the south side, and on the 5th a desperate battle occurred near Bothaville. The fight lasted five hours, and was disastrous for De Wet. He lost six guns and 100 prisoners, and had himself a narrow escape from being captured. He had been, strange to say, surprised during the night by Colonel Le Gallais' men, and while the combat was proceeding General Knox came up with his column, when the burghers had to quit the field, leaving their artillery behind. It was the most serious defeat to which Christian De Wet had yet been subjected during the war. The loss of his entire artillery in the fight was a severe blow both to the Boer general's following and to his prestige. About forty of his men were killed and wounded. Colonel Le Gallais, to whom the credit for this British triumph was really due, was among the English dead. Knox lost thirty killed and wounded.

JUDGE (NOW COMMANDANT) HERTZOG, WHO LED SECOND INVASION OF CAPE COLONY

The return home of the City of London Volunteers, who had campaigned for a few months in South Africa with little or no fighting and only a very few casualties, was made the occasion of one of the silliest and most disgraceful exhibitions of popular rejoicing that was ever witnessed in any city. So disgusting was this cockney orgy of beer, patriotism, and loyal yahooism, that more than one of the London Conservative papers expressed a strong hope that the center of the Empire might not again be the scene of such "loyalty," when manifested in rowdyism and in drunkenness.

Proclamations of martial law in various parts of Cape Colony, which were intended to intimidate the Dutch sympathizers with the Boer cause, produced the opposite effect. Recruits for the commandoes were the result of such measures. The old tyranny of military rule only evoked the old revolt against this kind of despotism, and the area of England's troubles in South Africa was thus deepened and extensively widened.

Summing up the details of British losses during the first month of the second year of the war—the month just after Lord Roberts had "annexed" the Transvaal, by proclamation—I find a record of 15 officers and 165 men killed in action; 70 men who died of wounds; 360 who died of disease begotten of the campaign; 20 killed in accidents, and 97 missing. Thus, not counting the sick in South African hospitals, or the unfit who were invalided home, nor all troops captured and again released, the total casualties for October, 1900, figure to 727; a number not much under the average monthly losses previous to the "conquest" of the Transvaal by proclamation.

November 8–15.—These losses and encounters, following so soon after British officers and papers had boasted of a termination of the war, produced a very savage outburst of journalistic ferocity in England. Several editors openly advocated the shooting of all Boers found in arms "within the Queen's conquered territories." These incitations from Great Britain naturally incited the generals in South Africa to adopt still sterner measures in the prosecution of the war. Houses were more frequently burned, especially in localities where raids had taken place, or other signs of reawakened Boer activity were found. Women and children were turned out of these homesteads, and revenge was thus taken upon them (after having been made British subjects, by Lord Roberts' proclamations) for the successful acts of warfare of their relatives. A despatch from Pretoria about this period gave the world an example of the civilization which England had imported into the Transvaal. This message said: "Not a single Boer house in the country between Dundee and Vryheid has been left standing. All have been burned by the British troops."

That these measures were the result of a humiliating feeling of anger at the failure of a huge British army to put down the determined resistance of the Boers, was manifest from the relative extent of territory held by both forces at the commencement of the second year's campaign. From the Orange River to Barberton, in the east of the Transvaal, a distance of 500 miles; from Barberton, west to Mafeking, 350 miles; and from Vryheid, in the south of the Transvaal, to Kimberley, on the western border of the Free

State, the English troops only held the railway lines and about thirty towns and villages; with these lines, however, subject to attack at fifty different points. The Boer forces were in virtual possession of the intervening sections of the two Republics, and of a great portion of Cape Colony. Over the whole of the territory thus still remaining as really unconquered, numerous conflicts had taken place, as related, during the month of October.

It was now resolved by the English to depopulate the towns and villages which they could not garrison after capturing. The inhabitants were to be "concentrated" in central camps, and to be fed by the British; the declared object being to prevent the non-combative Boers from giving assistance or information to the fighting commandoes. But the obvious purpose of the plan was to try to subdue the otherwise unconquerable burghers in the field by subjecting their wives and children to suffering and penalties for the continued resistance of their relatives. It was a resort to General Weyler's plan for the extermination of the Cubans. At the same time all press correspondents, except a few who represented rabid Jingo war organs, were to be excluded from the area of hostilities and of the Weylerite operations; a significant evidence of the kind of "warfare" upon which the British had resolved. All food—even growing crops—cattle, and horses were to be swept from the veldt, and nothing was to be left undone to end the "fanatical" resistance of the very people who were to have been rescued by England's kindly care from the rule of "a corrupt oligarchy," a year previously.

De Wet pulled himself together so soon after his defeat at Bothaville, on the 5th, that he appeared with 1,500 men before the British garrison in his native village, Dewetsdorp, twelve days subsequently, and summoned the 500 Highlanders and others who held the place, to surrender. This they refused to do, and a fight began which continued for a week. The garrison ultimately flew the white flag, and De Wet got two of the enemy's guns, in part payment for those which he had lost at Bothaville.

November 16–23.—President Kruger landed in Marseilles from the Dutch warship "Gelderland" on the 22nd, and was accorded a popular welcome unparalleled in the history of the city's public demonstrations. Deputations were present with addresses from thirty municipalities of France, and from numerous societies in Holland, Germany, Italy, and Ireland. In a speech which he delivered on the occasion he said: "During my lifetime I have had to fight the savages of South Africa many a time. But the barbarians we have to fight now are worse than the others. They even urge the Kaffirs against us. They burn the farms we have

worked so hard to construct, and they drive out our women and children whose husbands and brothers they have killed or taken prisoners, leaving them unprotected and roofless, and often without food to eat. But, whatever they do, we will not surrender. We will fight to the end."

From Marseilles to Paris, similar manifestations of French sympathy were given at each large city, culminating in a thorough Parisian reception at the hands of 200,000 people in the capital.

November 24–30.—On the 29th the French Chamber of Deputies adopted, without dissent, the following motion:

"The Chamber of Deputies, on the occasion of the arrival of the President of the Transvaal in France, is happy to address to him a sincere expression of its respectful sympathy."

On the following day the Senate, in like manner, passed a similar resolution.

December 1–7.—General De la Rey attacked a convoy which was on its way from Pretoria to Rustenburg on the 3rd. Fifteen of the escort were killed and twenty-three wounded; the convoy being captured. So active were the general's forces in the Western Transvaal, where, at least, half-a-dozen British columns had been operating during the three previous months, that the British defenders of Johannesburg had to construct barbed wire fences round the entire city as a protection against night raids by bands of De la Rey's commandoes.

Lord Roberts relinquished the chief British command in South Africa during the month of December, and sailed for England to assume the position of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, rendered vacant by the expiry of Lord Wolesley's term in that post.

December 8–15.—General Christian Botha attacked a body of British in the Vryheid district of the Transvaal, on the 10th, the fight lasting the whole day. The Boers were reported as losing 100 in killed and wounded; the enemy's casualties being 6 killed, 19 wounded, and 30 missing. The English report of this engagement represented the Boers as "drawing off" from the battle-field at seven at night, but it was not stated that they were pursued.

A party of Brabant's Horse (noted looters and house-burners) were surprised about the 13th, north of the Orange River, at Zastron, Free State, and suffered to the extent of 4 killed, 16 wounded, and 120 prisoners.

On the same date General De la Rey attacked a large force of British under General Clements at Nooitgedacht, in the region of the Magaliesberg Hills, forty miles southwest of Pretoria. Generals Broadwood and Clements were employed in surrounding De la

Rey's commando, 1,000 strong, at the time. The Boer general cut in between the two forces during the night, and attacked Clements' column, numbering 1,200, in the early hours of the following morning. In the first assault by the Boers the English held their ground. De la Rey then turned his attention to a position on a hill between Clements' camp and Broadwood's force which was held by four companies of the Northumberlands and some other troops. He stormed the hill and captured over 500 of those who held it, including eighteen officers. This dashing feat was completely successful, the English loss in killed and wounded, as in prisoners, being severe. The advantages of position and of numbers were entirely on the British side, but the fierceness of De la Rey's onslaught, the better tactics of the Boer officers, and the panic created among the Northumberlands, who had been captured at Stormberg once before, gave the victory to the West Transvaal Commandant-General.

After sweeping the hill and bagging the Northumberlands, the Boers rushed on the main camp below in the valley and drove Clements out of it; the English general retreating southward to Heckpoort.

The name "Nooitgedacht" stands for "Never thought of it," in the Taal (Boer) tongue.

While the fight was going on, General Broadwood, who had commanded the British at Sannas Post, was within seven miles of Clements' encampment, and must have heard the guns. After inflicting this severe punishment upon the English near where he had previously (in July), at Nitral's Nek, surprised and smashed the Lincolnshire Regiment and taken two guns, De la Rey withdrew to Rustenburg, and soon after released the latest British who had surrendered to him.

The total number of the enemy killed in this striking Boer victory was given, in the first English press reports, as 5 officers and 9 men; the wounded not mentioned; with 18 officers and 555 men of the Northumberland Fusiliers and of Imperial Yeomen reported as "missing." Later and correct reports gave the casualties as 56 officers and men killed, 153 wounded, and the 555 men who had surrendered and were subsequently released. These figures represented a total of 764 casualties. Commandant Beyers' commando, about 400 strong, cooperated with De la Rey in the final attack on Clements, but took no part in the attack upon the hill and the capture of the force which held it.

During this time—the anniversary of the great Boer victories of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso—the Boers were attacking British columns and posts in the Standerton district, in the south-

east; at the Magaliesberg Hills, in the southwest; and elsewhere, while they held without opposition the extreme north of the Transvaal. In the Free State, they were aggressive at Vrede, Bethlehem, Reddersburg, and other places; also, across the Orange River, in the Aliwal North district of Cape Colony, and in the northwest, in the Prieska and Britstown regions of the same British territory. Still, General Lord Roberts, when leaving South Africa for London, shortly before the defeat of General Clements, declared that "The war was over"!

December 16–23.—During the preceding part of this month General De Wet had been once more "surrounded," "pursued," "hemmed in," "harassed," and all but captured, as heretofore; only to be found, as usual, doubling upon his pursuers, picking up unconsidered trifles of men and provision, and moving where he wished to go in the eastern and northern regions of his own country—the familiar scenes of numerous previous exploits, and of innumerable marchings and countermarchings of his enemies' columns.

These events, occurring coincidently with Lord Roberts' voyage to England, induced (the London) "Punch" to sum up the situation, for the British army in South Africa, at this time, as follows:

"*A Page from a Military Diary.*

"*Monday.* The war practically at an end. Only a few thousand Boers showing fight, in various directions.

"*Tuesday.* Fighting completely ceased. Only a town or two taken and held by the enemy.

"*Wednesday.* Peace nearly concluded. Only a British convoy attacked and captured.

"*Thursday.* The last spark extinguished. Only a few score opponents bidding a large army defiance.

"*Friday.* Every man coming home. Only a garrison retained to hold every inch of territory against all comers.

"*Saturday.* The last day—absolutely. Only the probability of having to continue the defensive movement for an indefinite period on Monday."

In General De Wet's movements north from the Caledon River, on December 12, he was joined by Commandant Haasbroek in the region of Thabanchu, near the Basuto border. The British, under General Knox in strong force, were in command of hills ahead of the anticipated Boer line of movement, with another force in the rear. The situation was full of peril for the menaced commandoes, numbering close on 2,500 men, but it is emergencies of the kind which bring into play De Wet's inexhaustible soldierly resources. Finding himself so placed that all the commanding

heights around his position were held by greatly outnumbering foes, he decided upon a course of action which was completely successful. He sent Haasbroek with 500 men westward, as if to clear a way for the commandoes through a place called Victoria Nek, near where a big body of Britishers were located, but he had resolved to make a dash through a wide opening four miles in extent, in another—a northern—direction, and past two strong posts which commanded the entrance to this pass. The very audacity of the move secured its complete success. The British believed that the weakly defended exit which Haasbroek was watching, would tempt De Wet as the safest passage, while they felt convinced that the strongly protected pass to the north was secure against a possible escape in that direction.

Selecting his time for his contemplated dash, and forming his column into a wedge-like line, he gave the word and, with President Steyn leading the charge and the general himself bringing up the rear, the whole commando swept in a magnificent spur-gallop over the level veldt, past the British posts, and out into the country behind the lines of General Knox's surrounding cordons. It was like the "march past" of a hurricane, and was one of the finest exhibitions of cavalry operations given in the whole war.

Haasbroek successfully dispersed his men in small bodies, after the rush of De Wet's forces, and the English generals were left in sole possession of the valley which was to have witnessed the final surrender or capture of the Free State President and his Chief Commandant. De Wet lost one gun and twenty prisoners, only, in the engagement with General Knox's columns.

December 24–31.—During the latter part of December, 1900, two more bodies of Free State burghers commanded by Judge Hertzog and George Brand crossed the Orange River in a second invasion of Cape Colony. A (British) "Treason Court," which had been sitting at Colesberg, was compelled to leave hurriedly for the south, owing to the incursion of more "rebels" into the locality.

One of the invading Boer columns turned west towards Prieska, where there had been severe fighting in the earlier stages of the war; Lord Kitchener having been despatched there at that time by Lord Roberts to overawe the Dutch population with a show of force. Britstown, south of Prieska, was held in this second invasion for several days by a Boer force which had captured a squadron of Yeomanry.

This renewed fighting along the line of British positions and communications saw the coming forward of another Boer leader at this time who was destined to leave his mark on the records of the revolt in Cape Colony. Commandant Kritzinger is, I believe,

of German extraction, and joined the Free State army early in the war. He fought with distinction in the Colesberg campaign, and remained in the Southern Free State districts after Generals Ollivier, Grobler, and Lemmer had retreated on Kroonstad, following the surrender of Cronje at Paardeberg. Information about Kritzinger's early life and of his operations in Cape Colony are yet to be fully obtained when the struggle now going on terminates, and access can be had to sources of accurate knowledge. From a picture purporting to be that of the new commandant, he would appear to be young, tall, and handsome in appearance.

He appeared in the Burghersdorp district of the Cape Colony, in December, at the head of 700 men, and had an encounter with

GENERAL CHRISTIAN DE WET AND STAFF

the 9th Lancers, which was reported as being indecisive in its results.

On the 30th of December General Louis Botha attacked a British post at Helvetia, a little to the north of the Delagoa Bay line at Machadodorp, some 150 miles east of Pretoria, killing and wounding about sixty of the enemy and taking 200 prisoners. A 4.7 naval gun was taken with the surrendered British. The troops in possession of the place were the Liverpool Regiment. The Boers retired with their prisoners after the fight, followed by another British force. The Liverpools were disarmed and released after a few days. They had been captured and released once before.

Three convoys of stores and ammunition valued at £50,000 were captured by Boer forces at Kuruman (Griqualand West) and in the Cape district south of Colesberg in December. The escort of

the Kuruman convoy made no resistance. The train south of Colesberg which was held up contained a small force of Prince Alfred's Guards.

On the 31st of December, 1900, commandoes from the Free State were in portions of British territory over 200 miles south of the Orange River.

The general situation in the areas of hostilities as the year 1900 was brought to a close was such that the English seemed to be more occupied in defending British territory in South Africa against Boer invasion than in subduing the commandoes which still held the east, south, west, and north of the Transvaal, and almost the whole of the east of the Free State against Lord Kitchener's armies.

Lord Kitchener wound up the year's reports by informing the British War Office, that there was little change in the area of revolt in the Cape Colony, that General French had occupied Ventersdorp, some sixty miles from Johannesburg, that General Clements was strongly opposed by De la Rey's forces near Rustenburg, that a convoy was captured north of Kimberley, and that Zeerust, north of Mafeking, was being "besieged" by Boer forces.

Chapter XXXVII

DIARY OF THE WAR—JANUARY TO JUNE, 1901

CAPE TOWN IN DANGER—JOHANNESBURG RACE-COURSE RAIDED—KITCHENER DECIDES UPON BLOCKHOUSES—HE NARROWLY ESCAPES CAPTURE—DE WET AGAIN FIGHTS HIS WAY OUT OF A DRIVE—REPORTED DEFEAT OF BOTHA—PROTEST BY STEYN AND DE WET AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF RULES OF WAR BY BRITISH—PIET DE WET SURRENDERS—PEACE RUMORS—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITCHENER AND BOTHA—BOER GENERALS ALL REJECT OFFERED TERMS—COMMANDANT SCHEEPERS APPEARS IN CAPE COLONY—GENERAL PHILIP BOTHA KILLED—CHARACTER SKETCH—BOER GOVERNMENT DRIVEN FROM PIETERSBURG—BRITISH ORDERS RELATING TO USE OF WHITE FLAG—VARIOUS ENCOUNTERS IN CAPE COLONY—BRITISH GARRISONS BESIEGED—DUTCH EDITORS IMPRISONED—SUMMARY OF THE ENEMY'S LOSSES—WIFE OF ENGLISH GENERAL APPEALS TO AMERICA FOR RELIEF OF BOER WOMEN AND CHILDREN IMPRISONED IN CAMPS—ENGLISH MILITARY VIEW OF THE SITUATION—BATTLE OF VLAKFONTEIN—THE ENGLISH SHOW THEMSELVES TO BE "POOR LOSERS."

January 1-7.—The Boers began the new year so aggressively that the London "Standard" was constrained to confess there were fears for the safety of Cape Town, owing to the progress southward of the spirit of revolt which had been enkindled nearer the Orange River border. Guards had to be placed to protect the waterworks supplying the city, as a force of Boers were reported to be making south for Worcester, 150 miles distant. Martial law was proclaimed in all the districts immediately north of the city. At the same time Boer forces were operating in the Craddock, Maraisburg, Carnarvon, Somerset West, Steynsburg, and Middelburg districts of Cape Colony. The Commandants with these columns included Hertzog, Wessels, Fouche, George Brand, Kritzinger, Malan, Scheepers, Pretorius, and Nieuwenhaut. The Dutch population in these regions were credited with welcoming the invaders, and with supplying their wants in food and horses.

Coincidently with this extensive invasion of British territory by Boer forces, necessitating preparations for the defense of Cape Town, Lord Roberts was being rewarded in England with an Earldom and a Garter, for having "ended" the war, in December.

De Wet was reported as active in the Bethlehem, Free State, dis-

trict, and De la Rey as being near the Vaal River, south of Potchefstroom.

A despatch from Bloemfontein says Lord Kitchener has approved of a movement "to send Boer agents out to burghers on commando, to make known to them the terms of his proclamation." This means that Boer renegades, acting as English agents, would be sent to the laagers to induce the burghers to give up the fight. If Boer generals sent Boer agents on a similar mission to British columns, they would be shot as spies or as advocates of desertion.

A German volunteer who has just returned from the front tells a Berlin paper how the Boers are so well able to continue to fight. He says:

"What the Boer needs he obtains in abundance from the English. His absolute necessities consist of dried meat and maize flour. With the flour he makes his cakes. To this is added on most days some of the delicious English conserves, wagonloads of which fall into our hands from time to time.

"Our supply of ammunition never fails. Many of the Boers' Mausers have been buried, but most of our men are now armed with Martini-Henrys and Lee-Metfords, which have been taken from the British. Every attack on a British outpost renews our supply of ammunition for these rifles. The Boers are very careful, and 100 cartridges last a man a long time, for he never fires except when he is sure of hitting.

"Our supply of horses is also supplemented from the English stock, and it is surprising how the horses which have become worn-out under the English soon become fat and sturdy with the Boers. This comes, of course, from the fact that the Englishmen have no heart for their horses, or they do not know how to treat them."

One of the objects of the Boer invasion of Cape Colony was to recover some of the horses and cattle sent there from the Free State by the enemy.

On the 7th inst. it was reported that three British columns were in pursuit of De Wet, east of the Senekal district of the Free State, and that General Louis Botha was moving in the Ermelo region of the (eastern) Transvaal.

January 8–15.—A section of one of the three columns ventured too close to De Wet at Lindley (where he had captured the Irish Loyalists last June) on the 7th, with the result that fifteen were killed and over twenty wounded. These troops were a detachment of Lord Kitchener's body-guard, and formed part of General Charles Knox's column. Some thirty-five of the enemy are accounted for

in the above report, but nothing is said of the balance of Knox's men. They were possibly captured, disarmed, and released, as usually happens in such surrenders.

Later reports of this victory of the Commandant-General add nearly 100 hundred more British casualties to the previous list of their losses at that fight.

On the same date De la Rey with Commandant Steenekamp is said to have been defeated by General Babington's column, northwest of Pretoria. It is claimed that the Boers were forced to retire, after losing twenty men in killed and wounded. The British loss is not stated.

A skirmish is reported to have taken place in Cape Colony, a hundred miles north of Cape Town, while trenches have been dug on that city's race-course; farms within seven miles of Kimberley have been raided by Boers; cattle have been carried off by Boers within four miles of Pretoria, and an invading column has moved west in Cape Colony, towards Clanwilliam, as if making for Lamberts, or St. Helena Bay.

Lord Kitchener reports five simultaneous attacks upon as many British positions; the Boers taking advantage of darkness in each case. Louis Botha's men made an assault upon Belfast (where Lord Roberts "annexed" the Transvaal), and were beaten off; the British acknowledge losing twenty killed and over fifty wounded. Boer dead said to be twenty-four. Later reports of this affair relate that Ben Viljoen led the attack and captured the Royal Irish who garrisoned the town. His son was killed in the encounter. Viljoen held the town for two hours and then retired, releasing his prisoners.

De la Rey had three encounters recently with columns of the enemy in the Magaliesberg regions, west of Pretoria. The English claimed to have beaten off each assault.

Lord Kitchener reports that De Wet shot one of the "peace" envoys, and flogged two more, who had gone to his commando to ask burghers to stop fighting.

January 16-23.—A British convoy going from Dundee to Vryheid was attacked at the Bloed River by some of Christian Botha's men.

Aberdeen and Sutherland, two towns near the center of Cape Colony, have been entered by Boer forces who helped themselves to the hospitality denied by the British residents. They retired without injuring any of the citizens.

On the 17th Colvile's column was attacked near Standerton, on the Pretoria-Natal railway, by a force of Christian Botha's men. Reported repulse of Boers, "with heavy losses." On the same

date an attack was made on a Boer force at Ventersburg, Free State, which was successful.

Zeerust, in the western Transvaal, so often held, alternately, by Boers and British during the past twelve months, is reported again besieged by some of De la Rey's men. Two other garrisons, in the south of the Free State, have been evacuated by the British, who took the inhabitants over the Orange River; the British being unable to hold the places, Smithfield and Rouxville, against the opposing Boer forces.

A body of Commandant Beyers' men raided the race-course, near Johannesburg, where the cattle of the British garrison were grazing, on January 17. They took 1,700 head with them, but lost 500 of these in the darkness. The day following a mounted British force went in pursuit, and retook the 500 straying cattle. The report of this achievement in the English press recorded the taking of 500 cattle "from the Boers," but nothing about the original capture by Beyers' men on the race-course.

Reports in the London papers of this date made reference to the "relief of the Hoopstad garrison" in the northwest of the Free State. No intimation had previously been given to the public that any British force had been besieged in that town.

Queen Victoria died on January 22.

January 24–31.—A British patrol was captured at Maraisburg, Cape Colony, on the 24th.

De la Rey attacked General Cunningham near Ventersdorp, Transvaal, on the 26th, and was making things warm for the enemy when General Babington arrived with reenforcements, compelling the Boers to retire. Cunningham had over forty casualties. Another section of De la Ray's commando captured a small body of Yeomen near Lichtenburg, De la Rey's birthplace.

South of Kimberley a British post was taken and a train held up. Boer force not mentioned, but this being General Kolbe's ground, where the genial old Free Stater fought in the earlier days of the war, he is probably still hovering near the Diamond City.

Christian Botha and Tobias Smuts attacked General Smith-Dorrien in the Carolina district, eastern Transvaal, the fight lasting five hours. The Boers retired, but were not pursued. No casualties are given in the cabled reports of the fight.

About this time De Wet is stated to be in three places, hundreds of miles apart.

Olive Schreiner, the gifted authoress, is forbidden by martial-law officers to leave the district in which she resides.

Damage to the extent of £200,000 was done to one of the Rand mines recently by some of Beyers' commando.

Lord Kitchener, while traveling towards Middelburg, east of Pretoria, had a narrow escape from being killed or captured. The train was derailed and fired upon by a body of Boers. They were doubtless ignorant of the presence of the important passenger on the train thus attacked, or a more determined assault might have been delivered. The Boers were beaten off.

News from Bloemfontein that another of the "peace" envoys, a man named Wessels, has been shot by orders of General De Wet.

It is circulated from Lourenzo Marquez that Colonel Blake, at the head of "2,000 Boers," was in Portuguese territory, east of Komatipoort, with the object of releasing the surrendered burghers and volunteers in the hands of the Portuguese authorities. He has doubtless a more practical purpose in view with, probably, 100 men of the alleged 2,000.

Near the end of the month a British post at Modderfontein, on the Gatsrand Hills, some 70 miles southwest of Johannesburg, was attacked by a force of De la Rey's men. The British, who were about 250 strong and had a gun, fought well for two days. Reenforcements of near 1,000 men and four guns were sent from Krugersdorp by the English in that garrison to relieve the Modderfontein post. News of this movement was conveyed to Commandant Smuts (Attorney-General of the Transvaal), who was with De la Rey's commandoes at the time. He flung 800 men with a pom-pom into the hills, across the path of General Cunningham and of the relieving British column. These were hotly attacked by Smuts, and so badly mauled that their progress was successfully arrested until the Modderfontein garrison were compelled to surrender; 220 men, a pom-pom, a convoy, and large quantities of ammunition falling into Boer hands. In the final assault upon the plucky garrison, the Boers used bayonets which they had previously captured from their enemies. Cunningham was driven back to Krugersdorp.

Commandant Smuts is a young man, aged about 35, of medium height, slender in build, with a strong, intellectual head and face. He was Attorney-General of the South African Republic in 1899. He finished his education in Cambridge University, England. He was one of the most brilliant young men in the Transvaal, cultured, courteous, and gentlemanly; a man who would be a credit and an ornament to any government in existence. My last evening in Pretoria was spent in his house. Roberts was then advancing on the Vaal River, and it had been decided, on that very day, by the Transvaal Executive, that Pretoria was not to be defended. Mr. and Mrs. Smuts, therefore, knew they would soon be without a home, but there was neither anger nor lamentation in the conver-

sation which took place. "We will ultimately be defeated of course," said Mr. Smuts, "and will have to put up with the consequences, no matter how serious these may be; but you can rest assured that England will have to pay the highest price she has ever yet paid for victory, before she turns the Transvaal into a South African Ireland."

"And then?"

"Well," replied Mr. Smuts, smiling, "the fight for Nationhood, under the new conditions, will not continue quite as long as that which your country has made. We are, fortunately, further away from England."

COMMANDANT (LATE ATTORNEY-GENERAL) SMUTS

I have learned since returning from the Transvaal that the little girl, eighteen months old, who was the prattling center of attraction on that evening, died of hardship and exposure after the British occupation of Pretoria. Mr. Smuts joined De la Rey, following the battle of Dalmanutha, as assistant general, and has since distinguished himself as one of the most capable and daring commandants in the field. The death of that wee girlie has probably cost hundreds of British households pangs of sorrow as keen as those which the brutality of the Jingo war inflicted upon as happy a home as it has ever been my privilege to enter.

February.—While on his way south, after the defeat of the British detachment near Lindley, De Wet fell in with a force of the enemy under Major Pilcher, northeast of Bloemfontein. He engaged these troops on the southeastern side of the Brandfort hills, not far from Sannas Post, forcing them to retire towards the Free State capital. During the engagement the artillery fire attracted the attention of Major Crewe, who was patrolling the same district with a composite force. This second English column advanced to the hill, to meet De Wet's men, after the retreat of Pilcher. Crewe and his force were immediately attacked, and were forced to retire in the direction of General Knox's main column. They were ambushed, however, by a section of De Wet's men who had moved in their rear for that purpose, and, after a four hours' fight, Crewe was

compelled to retreat, leaving his convoy, a pom-pom, and a number of prisoners in the hands of De Wet.

The extraordinary circumstance surrounding this engagement was the fact that Pilcher and Crewe, with their respective forces, were two out of six columns specially organized for, and actually engaged in, the old task of capturing De Wet and his single commando. Generals Knox, Hamilton, Maxwell, and Colonel White, each at the head of a column, were the other commanders who for weeks had been so employed. The same task had been already undertaken a dozen times, by probably a dozen English generals and columns. On this occasion De Wet had succeeded by one of his old stratagems in sending the four stronger columns of the enemy northeast from his actual objective, on a wild-goose chase, while he doubled southwest, found Pilcher and Crewe, engaged them in detail, as related, beat them both, and went on his way serenely while the six British officers were doubtless settling among themselves the question, which of them was most to blame for the brilliant manner in which they had all contributed to the defeat of the united purpose of the columns.

After defeating Crewe and Pilcher and once more shaking himself free of "surrounding" columns, De Wet crossed the Bloemfontein-Pretoria line, a little north of Brandfort, and made for the Orange River, by wheeling south and fording the Modder between the Free State capital and Paardeberg. He met with no serious opposition while traversing the country up which he had dashed just a year previously in his efforts to gain possession of the drifts east of Cronje's then position, and to forestall the English. He now swept southward past Jagersfontein and Fauresmith, which were held by small garrisons of the enemy who made no attempt to stop his well-equipped commando. He crossed Orange River at a drift west of Norvals Pont, and directed his course towards De Aar, the important junction and garrison on the Cape Town-Kimberley line.

Meanwhile from all available points the enemy's forces were being moved by horse and rail to cope with this new danger in British territory. The shouting Jingoes of Cape Town apprehended nothing less than a march on their delectable city by the redoubtable Boer general. It was fortunate for them that his available force would not permit of any such big enterprise. His objects in joining in the invasion which Steyn had planned in November were political, in addition to having more immediate relations to the plan of campaign which he had commenced after the occupation of Bloemfontein. President Steyn's chief purpose was to strengthen Mr. Kruger's hands in Europe, by showing the

Powers and the public how an army of 250,000 British soldiers were not alone unable to defeat the Federal forces still in the field in two Republics, but also incapable of preventing the Chief Commandant of the Free State from carrying a commando and its baggage a distance of 300 miles, between lines of British posts and in defiance of "surrounding" columns, in the execution of a plan to invade the enemy's own territory.

This political purpose carried out, De Wet's military objects were to recruit the commandoes in men and in horses, and to divert the attention of the British forces from Hertzog, Kritzinger, Malan, Scheepers, and others who were operating in the west, center, and east of the Colony.

De Wet was attacked in crossing the Kimberley railway north of De Aar and, as he had no less than 200 carts and wagons with him at the time, his movements were considerably impeded. His rear-guard fought the usual containing action with the enemy's advanced lines, and enabled the commando to take most of its baggage out of danger. In carrying out this plan, some wagons, ammunition, and horses had to be left behind, and these, together with fifty men it is claimed, were captured by the English. De Wet divided his commando into several sections, in his old manner, and then proceeded northwest where he expected to join Hertzog and George Brand.

These Commandants, with a small force of about 700 well-mounted men, had crossed into Cape Colony in December. They marched almost due south, through the center of the Colony, until reaching Murraysburg, meeting with little opposition. They then directed their course northwest, into the wide regions of Calvinia and Clanwilliam.

Having carried out whatever scheme had taken the astute Judge-Commandant to the sea at the mouth of the Olifants River, he turned northeast, this time followed by a force of Cape Town volunteers, "Kitchener's Fighting Scouts," who always prudently succeeded in keeping within a day's march of the small commando. Near the end of February, President Steyn and De Wet met Hertzog and Brand between Philipstown and Petrusville, and the movements which followed were the result of the conference thus held.

Judge Hertzog is in the Free State councils and forces a counterpart to Attorney-General Smuts in the Transvaal. He is a lawyer and soldier, and has shown himself to be as able at the head of a commando as he was at the bar of the Republic. I had the pleasure of meeting him in Kroonstad in 1900. He is about 45 years old, of medium height, and of a Spanish type of face; with a keen and subtle intellect that would suggest a German metaphysician rather

than a Dutch lawyer. His wife, a charming and cultured lady, was subjected to the indignities and suffering of a concentration camp after the capture of the two capitals—thanks to Lord Roberts' British chivalry in making war upon the wives and children of his foes, in order to bring them under English rule, and to a proper appreciation of all its blessings.

Having obtained a large supply of fresh horses from Hertzog and Brand, De Wet and President Steyn prepared to retrace their course back again to the northeast of the Free State. The commando was split up under Froneman, Nel, and others, and, with the cooperation of Brand and Hertzog, it became an easy task to mislead the enemy as to the particular drift over the Orange River which would be utilized by De Wet. Each section acted as a decoy to the blundering British, and, while half-a-dozen generals and colonels were wiring daily that they were on the point of capturing President Steyn and his Chief Commandant, these men crossed the river on the 28th of February, between Norvals Pont and Zand Drift, with convoy and spare horses, and revealed to their pursuers where they really were when casualties in a fight near Philippolis, in the Free State, a few days afterward, had to be attended to by a British ambulance.

The expedition from near Heilbron, in the north of the Free State, to De Aar, in Cape Colony, and back—a total distance of fully 700 miles—took about seven weeks in its execution. De Wet's flying column did not exceed 2,000 men on starting, and with this body he fought and defeated forces of the Lindley garrison; in passing beat Pilcher and Crewe, in detail, east of Brandfort, and took a gun and convoy; faced south, with Bloemfontein on his left, and half-a-dozen English posts on his right, and swept by them with soldierly contempt for their impotent knowledge of his movements; crossed the Orange River, after Kitchener and his generals had had a fortnight's notice of his intention to invade Cape Colony; entered British territory and remained there a fortnight; fought several skirmishes during that time with the enemy's forces who had, as usual, "surrounded" him; formed a junction with Hertzog; obtained fresh horses and some recruits, and then faced backward to recross the river, guarded at a dozen points by as many British forces; regained the north bank; brushed aside whatever opposition lay in his path north to Fauresmith, and arrived in the east of the Free State again with a loss of less than 150 of the men who rode with him during the whole of that splendid performance.

It was one more added to the many brilliant achievements of the great leader, and a corresponding exhibition of the hopeless ineptitude of his military opponents. But what generals and colonels

and columns galore had failed to do with their "flying" detachments and brigades, the London press, resolved, for a time at least, to accomplish.

By the end of February the news agencies ended the war, in the most satisfactory manner possible, to themselves: President Steyn was believed to have surrendered; De Wet was, at last, hopelessly beaten, and on the point of being captured; Christian Botha was negotiating for terms with the English general in front of him, while Commandant-General Louis Botha had, according to one report, "surrendered to Lord Kitchener, at Middelburg, before nine o'clock on yesterday"—the 28th of February. And in this way another month of the war was ended.

While still in Cape Colony, a proclamation signed by President Steyn and General De Wet was issued charging the British with a systematic violation of all the rules of civilized warfare accepted by the Powers at The Hague Conference. The proclamation alleged, "that rape, robbery, house-burning, and other crimes were committed by the enemy in insolent defiance of all regard for sex, age, or property." The document ended in the declaration:

"The Republics are not conquered. The war is not finished. The burgher forces of the two States are still led by responsible officers, as from the commencement of the war, under the supervision of the Governments of both Republics."

Early in February the following announcement was made by the British War Office:

"In view of recent Boer activity in various directions, his Majesty's Government have decided, in addition to the large forces recently equipped locally in South Africa, to reenforce Lord Kitchener by 30,000 mounted troops beyond those already landed in Cape Colony."

This was two months after Lord Roberts had received an Earldom for having finished the war.

During De Wet's movement south into Cape Colony, Lord Kitchener organized another "sweeping" expedition for the south-eastern districts of the Transvaal, where Louis Botha was reported to be at the head of "7,000 Boers."

Kitchener's columns were to move as follows against the Commandant-General, and to keep in touch with each other: General Smith-Dorrien's from Wonderfontein, General Campbell's from Middelburg, General Alderson's from Eerste Fabrieken, General Knox's from Kaalfontein, Major Allenby's from Zuurfontein,

General Dartnell's from Springs, and General Colvile's from Greylingstad.

These columns, being fully equipped for so big an enterprise, set out on what was confidently hoped to be a movement as successful as Lord Roberts' march upon the Modder, just a year previously, and the capture of Cronje which followed. French and Smith-Dorrien, both of whom had played conspicuous parts in that, the most important English victory of the war, were the leading officers in this second great enterprise for the cornering and capture of Botha. It was also to be General French's second attempt in the same region to accomplish Botha's downfall.

The Commandant-General was in the East Transvaal at this time, in touch with his brother Christian Botha, and Tobias Smuts of Ermelo, with a combined force of some 4,000 men. They had also a large number of non-combatants, and women and children with them, and much stock of cattle and sheep; the Carolina, Ermelo, and Bethel districts being the richest pasture districts of the Transvaal. Lord Kitchener, learning of all this, laid his plans, had his seven columns organized, and, everything being prepared for a culminating swoop, confided the execution of the work to General French.

Botha was at Bothwell, near Carolina, when French set forth to find him, while his scattered forces and non-combatant following were in laagers southward toward Lake Chrissie, Ermelo, and Amsterdam. French's plan was to move a force under Smith-Dorrien east and north of Bothwell, so as to bar a Boer retreat towards Lydenburg, while French himself was to lead his own right wing, in a corresponding movement, to the south, or left, of Botha; the remaining columns to operate in between; the grand object begin to pin the Boer commandoes in against the Swaziland border, and force them to fight, in a corner against overwhelming forces, to a finish.

Smith-Dorrien's column reached the locality of Bothwell in a four days' march—covering thirty miles—and was suddenly and fiercely attacked on the 6th of February by Botha. The Commandant-General had easily divined the purpose of the movement against him, and had resorted to the favorite Boer tactics of fighting a determined rear-guard action against the enemy, so as to retard his advance and enable the impedimenta of the laagers to obtain a safe start upon an agreed direction of retreat. Botha's main plan was, to hold Smith-Dorrien in check until the Boer column would be in line with Ermelo, on its retreat to the hills of Piet Retief, and then to wheel round, face and harass French who was moving direct south on Ermelo, and contain him until the

burghers, their women, children, and cattle had passed on to the Randbergen hills south of Amsterdam. In the carrying out of these rival plans Botha showed himself the successful opponent of the ablest cavalry general in the enemy's service.

He attacked Smith-Dorrien as related, beat him to a standstill for two days, inflicting a loss of upward a hundred men, and then moved off in the rear of his own retiring column. General Tobias Smuts held his own town of Ermelo until French appeared from the north, when he fell back and joined the two Bothas, who now with united forces delayed and worried French and his seven columns until it was no longer possible for them to remain where their lines of communication were imperiled every day, after the great coup had failed. Instead of enclosing Botha between himself and Smith-Dorrien, French found all his columns faced by a thin line of sharpshooters twenty miles in extent, by which he was prevented from making more than seven miles progress per day, even with his cavalry.

The English made the best show possible in their reports, as against the second palpable failure of French to carry out the plan for which his latest and largest command had been organized and equipped.

They published the following list of achievements:

"Two hundred and eighty-two Boers 'known to have been killed and wounded in action'; 56 prisoners of war; 183 surrendered; one 15-pounder gun; 462 rifles; 160,000 rounds small ammunition; 3,500 horses; 74 mules; 3,530 trek oxen; 18,700 cattle; 155,400 sheep; 1,070 wagons and carts.

"British casualties: Five officers and 41 men killed; 4 officers and 108 men wounded."

The following additional captures were reported later:

"One 19-pounder Krupp gun, one howitzer, one Maxim complete, 20,000 rounds small ammunition, 153 rifles, 388 horses, 52 mules, 834 trek oxen, 5,600 cattle, 9,800 sheep, 287 wagons and carts.

"Boers' casualties, 4 killed, 5 wounded, 300 surrendered."

The guns here reported as having been captured had all been buried months previously, and rendered useless, by the Boers. Fully seventy per cent. of the Boers mentioned as taken and surrendered were non-combatants, women, and children. Botha's actual losses, in killed and wounded, did not reach 150, during the four weeks in which it took the seven British columns to march through the southeastern Transvaal against the relatively small

opposing forces. The cattle, sheep, and wagons were the stocks and belongings of the rich farms which the English picked up as they passed along, and it was in the seizure of these where French's main triumph lay. It turned out afterwards that a large quantity of this stock was retaken by the Boers.

It was during the progress of this loudly heralded movement for the ending of the war in the Transvaal that De Wet and Steyn had made their dash south to Cape Colony and back again, and it was this achievement, and not French's capture of women and sheep, which evoked the admiration of the on-looking world.

French reached Heidelberg, on the Natal-Pretoria railway, by the 27th of February, followed by a responsive flourish of London journalistic trumpets over his magnified triumphs. The victory-making editors did not know at the time that Lord Kitchener had already invited Botha to a conference, for the 28th, to discuss a possible ending of the war; induced thereto, doubtless, by the raid of De Wet into British territory, and all which that might mean in the way of stimulating further revolt within Cape Colony.

On the 6th of March—seven days following the London rejoicings at French's capture of Ermelo, Carolina, etc.,—Louis Botha was penning a manifesto to the Boers, from this same Ermelo, encouraging them to fight to the death for Transvaal independence.

The minor events in February were dwarfed by the two rival movements briefly summarized, and do not call for specific mention.

March 1-7.—On the 1st, Lord Kitchener reported the capture of eighty of Kitchener's Fighting Scouts. He forgot to add that these surrendered to a body of 200 of Hertzog's commando, almost without a fight. This very much fighting body, at least in name, was a Cape Town volunteer force, and resembled in their martial prowess and triumphs the incomparable "Bushmen" who have been described in earlier chapters, from accounts of their characters and doings supplied to the press by their chaplain. The Cape Town heroes were a body of notorious braggarts and looters, and it was in consequence of their doings, and those of Brabant's Horse, a kindred Colonial farm-pillaging force, that General De Wet and Mr. Steyn issued the proclamation referred to on page 484.

On the 5th, De la Rey, with a force not particularized, attacked the British garrison in his native town, Lichtenburg, which is some fifty miles nearer Johannesburg than Mafeking. The garrison numbered 500 men and had two guns. The attack continued during the whole day and was going badly for the defenders on the day following, when reenforcements arrived from the nearest posts of the enemy, compelling De la Rey to abandon the siege. The

British losses were reported at fifty-six killed and wounded. The Boer casualties are unknown. Lichtenburg district has been "swept" repeatedly by columns under Lord Methuen, General Babington, and other British officers.

Maraisburg, north of Craddock, Cape Colony, was taken and occupied by a Boer column on the 7th of March.

March 8–31.—Piet De Wet, brother of the famous general, surrendered to the British during this month. He stated his motive to be a desire to bring a hopeless war, which was working the ruin of the two Republics, to a finish. Motives other than this were attributed to him by the Boers in the field. He had been an admirable fighter from the beginning of the war, and had shown himself a most capable officer when in command of men. In the campaign around Colesberg, in December and January (1899-1900), he exhibited some of the very best qualities of Boer generalship. After laying down his arms he addressed a long letter to his brother begging him to give up the struggle against the British.

A correspondence between General Louis Botha and Lord Kitchener was published at this period which gave rise to a general expectation that peace might soon eventuate. It was alleged, on the English side, that Botha was seeking an excuse to surrender, and, on the pro-Boer side, that Kitchener was more desirous of peace than his Government. The alarming manner in which the second invasion of Cape Colony was proceeding had much to do with the total abandonment of Lord Roberts' "unconditional surrender" terms, and with bringing about a conference between Lord Kitchener and General Louis Botha. It transpired, afterward, that it was not the Boer leader who first expressed a desire for the meeting.

The conference took place at Middelburg, east of Pretoria. Kitchener offered terms which would virtually amount to Canadian Home Rule, "as soon as practicable," after the war ended. Botha agreed to communicate these terms to the other Boer generals. Kitchener, in his report of the conference, said that Botha "had showed good feeling."

Mr. Chamberlain did not approve of all that Kitchener had proposed, and amended his terms. On the final submission of these to Botha, the latter replied to Kitchener, saying, "After the mutual exchange of views at our interview at Middelburg on the 28th of February, it will not surprise your Excellency to know that I do not feel disposed to recommend that the terms of your letter shall have the consideration of my Government."

A Boer commandant appeared with a body of men at Aberdeen, in Cape Colony, on March 10. He raided the town, released

the prisoners from the jail, and retired in the direction of another invading column further west.

Commandant Kritzinger with a force of 700 mounted men has raided the Bedford district of Cape Colony of its horses. He was pursued by Colonels De Lisle and Corringe, and fought several running engagements with their forces from the 12th to the 18th inst., when he was reported as having been worsted on the last date, and forced to retire north into the Craddock region.

At the very time when the British press was informing the public of General Botha's anxiety to surrender, he was circulating the following proclamation among the Boers of the two Republics:

"Dear Brothers,—The tendency of Lord Kitchener's letter tells you very plainly that the British Government aims at nothing else but the total destruction of our African people, and that it is absolutely impossible for us to accept the terms offered therein. In fact, little else does the letter contain, and even much less than the British Government would be obliged to do if we should one day have to give up the struggle. Beware! It will give us a Legislative Council to consist of its own officials and members appointed by itself. The wishes of the people are not considered at all. It also proposes, as a great favor, this, that only one million pounds are to be made available to cover our national debts, whereas, according to legal advice, should at an unwished-for time matters turn out unfavorably, the British Government must hold itself responsible for all the national debts, and cannot simply take away our State profits. Our burghers have done some hard fighting, but how could this be avoided when the existence of our nationality is unjustly threatened? It was hard for them to have to spill so much blood and shed so many tears in this war, but it would be much harder if we should have to give up our country.

"I sincerely sympathize with the burghers whose families have been removed. Let not one despair on account of this, for he who despairs and gives in is not only unjust towards his own people, but also puts aside his own faith.

"The more severely we are grieved by the enemy the more courageously we must defend our ground and our just claims.

"Let us, like Daniel in the lions' den, put our trust in the Lord, for in His time and in His way he is sure to deliver us.

"(W.S.) LOUIS BOTHA,
"Commandant-General.

"Ermelo, 15th of March, 1901."

General Philip Botha was killed in an action on the 21st, the particulars of which I have not seen published anywhere. The reports said he was killed on Doornberg, in the northeast of the Free State. Philip Botha was General De Wet's most capable

lieutenant in all his movements after the surrender of Cronje. He operated, generally, in the northeast section of the Free State, near where his splendid farm was located (and burned by the British), and in the southeast of the Transvaal. He was the oldest of the Botha family, and of five brothers, all fighting in the war. He was one of the handsomest men in the Federal armies: tall and dark, and as courteous as a cultivated Spaniard. I spent some

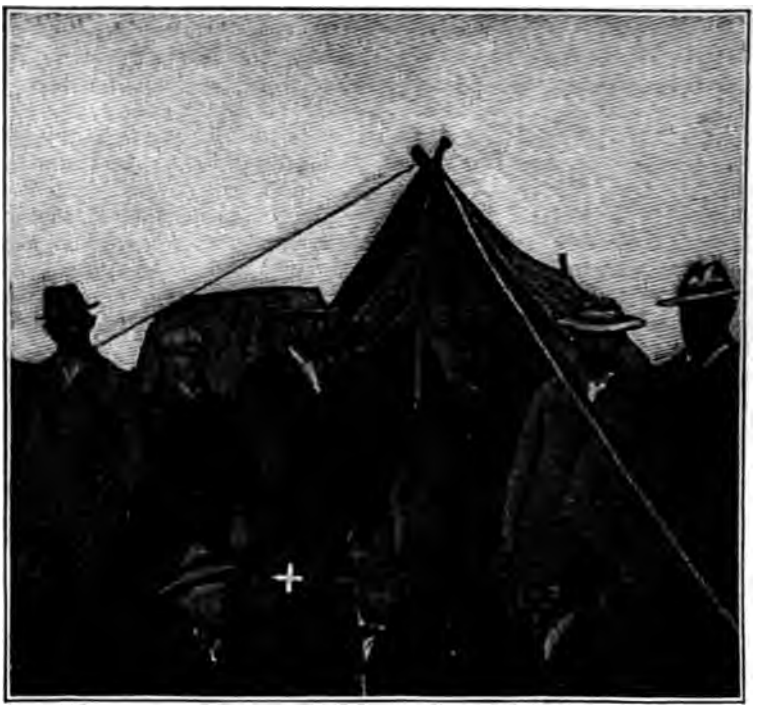


Photo by Mr. Davitt

GENERAL PHILIP BOTHA AND STAFF

Commandant George Brand the extreme figure on left

time with him, east of Brandfort, in April, 1900, and he impressed me greatly by his all-round capacity, gentlemanly bearing, and genial disposition. His commando were devotedly attached to him, and would follow him anywhere. He had three sons in his column at the time, and two of these are reported as being wounded in the fight in which the general was killed. A combat occurred at Vrede, near General Philip Botha's home, on the day on which his death was announced in the press, and this was probably the occasion of the fatal encounter for him. Should this surmise be

correct, a brave man's death, near his own homestead, fighting the ruthless enemy of his race and of nationhood, lent a dramatic interest to the general's last stand which would be in keeping with his soldierly patriotism throughout the war.

I have done this volume the honor of dedicating it to his memory.

The reported result of the fighting round Vrede was the retreat of the British after a stubborn resistance by the Boer force.

On the 22nd, Commandant Smuts fought an engagement with a force of Yeomen near Klerksdorp, southwest of Johannesburg. The British appear to have got the worst of the encounter, tho the ultimate results of the fight involved De la Rey in the biggest disaster experienced by him in the war.

The brush with the Yeomanry on the 22nd led to a surprise attack the following day upon De la Rey's laager between Klerksdorp and Lichtenburg. General Babington, with two large columns came to the assistance of the Yeomanry, and followed Smuts, who retired north in the direction of De la Rey's laager and convoy. The entire force with De la Rey at Kaffir Kraal at this time was about 1,000 men. These fought a resolute rear-guard action under the command of De la Rey, but the British mounted forces were so strong that the Boers had to abandon all their guns and the entire convoy. Most of the artillery taken by the English had been captured from them previously. De la Rey lost fifty killed and wounded and over 100 prisoners in the two days' fighting. With the exception of Abram's Kraal, where he fought Lord Roberts for a whole day with 300 Rand Police, this was his first defeat in a stand-up fight.

April 1-15.—A dozen small engagements at widely separated places, from Lydenburg in the northeast Transvaal to Aberdeen in Cape Colony, were reported during the past week. The Boers captured a large supply train near the Natal border; the British beat Commandants Malan and Fouche in a five hours' fight at Blaaukrantz, in Cape Colony; Scheepers was also engaged and forced north; while Commandant Fourie, in the southeast of the Free State, had a running fight of twenty miles with General Bruce Hamilton's column.

The most important movement at present reported from the seat of the war is, however, the progress of a British force, under the command of Colonel Plumer, in an advance north from Pretoria, by the Pietersburg line, towards Nylstroom. No effective resistance was offered by opposing Boer forces, and the towns and districts in that region were occupied by the enemy with very little opposition. Pietersburg had been the seat of Transvaal Government for several months, and the purpose of the Plumer column was to

attack the place. This was successfully done; General Schalk Burger and the acting members of the Transvaal Executive retiring from the town further east into the Zoutpansberg regions, whither they were not pursued. Anticipating this movement on the part of the enemy, the Boer supplies of cattle, food, and ammunition in Nylstroom and Pietersburg had been transferred to secure locations long before the arrival of the English forces.

During the past fortnight the press agencies which had "captured" De Wet in attempting to recross the Orange River at the end of February, told the public that the general was known to be in the Senekal district, a little south of where he started from in his dash on Cape Colony in January. It appears, however, according to better informed sources, that he has been on the Natal border where he has held a conference with Commandant-General Botha.

A dozen attacks upon supply trains are reported from as many localities; most of them occurring in Cape Colony.

General French's columns are said to be devasting the entire Carolina, Ermelo, Bethel, and Piet Retief districts in the Transvaal.

A troop of 5th Lancers and Imperial Yeomanry were attacked early in the month and captured north of Aberdeen, Cape Colony, by Boer forces under Kritzinger after several hours' fighting.

Owing to the increasing number of surrenders made by British officers to Boer forces, an order was issued in this month by the War Office, warning all whom it might concern that officers who should raise the white flag in presence of the enemy would be tried by court-martial.

Commandants Kritzinger, Scheepers, Fouche, and Van Reenan are reported "as active" in the Cape Colony districts of Aberdeen, Murraysburg, and Middelburg, respectively.

A force of Yeomanry under Major De Burg was surrounded in a district of Cape Colony, not mentioned, by a body of Boers led by Commandant George Brand, a son of ex-President Brand of the Free State. To Brand's demand that the enemy should lay down their arms, De Burg replied, "No surrender." The Boer officer then addressed a courteous note to his opponent, saying enough of blood had been already shed, and that he gave him five minutes to decide whether more of his men were to be sacrificed. De Burg then surrendered.

About the same period, a body of Brabant's Horse were attacked and taken by Commandant Malan.

Commandant Groblaar sustained a defeat by General Dartnell's column in the Vryheid district of the Transvaal. Two hundred Boers are said to have surrendered. Probably most of them are

non-combatants, as it would be otherwise reported had they been armed fighters.

A train of provisions was captured near Molteno, Cape Colony, at this date.

Reports likewise spoke of a "continued siege of Zeerust by the Boers." This place is in the Marico district of the West Transvaal, northeast from Mafeking, in the region where lieutenants of De la Rey's have operated against the enemy's columns since the fall of Pretoria.

The news agencies have again disposed of De Wet. Last week he was located, in the course of three days, in places three hundred miles apart. This week the correspondents who are "surrounding" him in this way announce that he is reported to be insane.

In the meantime Lord Kitchener has decided upon the building of chains of blockhouses, bullet-proof in construction, along the lines of his communications, for the better protection of the railways, and as impediments to De Wet's and other Boer mobility.

April 16–23.—Clearly Kitchener is tiring of the office of messenger of evil tidings.

News relating to the siege of Hoopstad says that 1,500 British troops were shut up there and isolated for over ninety days. There was not a word of any such siege sent by Lord Kitchener (for publication) to London, until the place had been relieved.

On the 16th Commandant Smuts was attacked and defeated near Klerksdorp by Colonel Rawlinson and a greatly superior force. Smuts lost a gun, 6 killed, and 30 prisoners.

At a meeting of representative Free State Boers, held at Boshof (supposed to be in the possession of the English), near Kimberley, southwest of Hoopstad, on the 16th of April, Mr. Steyn was reelected President of the Orange Free State; his first term of five years having expired. At this time, and virtually since Hertzog and Brand led the invasion into Cape Colony in December, all the western and southwestern districts of the Free State have been in Boer hands. Hence the Presidential election at Boshof.

A messenger from General Louis Botha to President Kruger arrived in Holland on the 20th of April. He reported that State Secretary Reitz commissioned him to say that the Boers could maintain the struggle against England "comfortably, for two or three years more."

Three editors of Dutch papers in Cape Colony were tried by juries for "seditious language" and sent to prison. One of these, Mr. Cartwright, is of English nationality.

The British column sent north towards Pietersburg to clear the country of Boers and cattle, was reported as being entirely success-

ful; large numbers of men and cattle were captured, and sent south to Pretoria. Information from Boer sources, however, states that the men thus taken were chiefly non-combatants, and that the "large numbers" were mainly composed of women and children. Behind Plumer's column a party of Boers swooped down upon and captured a patrol of Hussars near Nylstroom. While Plumer's column was operating northeast, in the manner previously related, Generals W. Kitchener and Douglas were cooperating with it, in a northwestern direction, from the Delagoa Bay railway; both movements having for object the clearing of the Lydenburg and Pietersburg regions of cattle and of non-combatants.

Twenty-five men of the Prince of Wales' Light Horse were ambushed near Kroonstad, presumably by some of De Wet's burghers, about this time.

A patrol of the 9th Lancers were attacked and captured, but the locality of the mishap (in Cape Colony) was not reported.

The latest fighting in the Dordrecht district of the same Colony resulted in the Boers being compelled to retire.

General French, who had been despatched by Lord Kitchener on another "sweeping" expedition to the southeast of the Transvaal, was not heard from for weeks. Rumor said he had been captured by General Botha, but the report was not true. He was engaged in forcing the Boers in that region to fall back eastward, again, towards Swaziland, and his efforts were credited with having "cleared the country of all its people and stock." This would be the fourth clearance of the series, counting General Buller's march eastward last June.

A train containing food and forage was held up by a Boer force at Molteno, south of Stormberg, in Cape Colony.

The Boxburg commando of 106 men is reported to have surrendered, voluntarily, at Middelburg, Transvaal.

April 24-30.—English reports from South Africa claim that there are 18,000 Boers now in the hands of the British, as prisoners. Fully 7,000 of these must be non-combatants and young boys.

On the 24th it was reported by the War Office that a British escort under Major Twyford, on its way from Belfast to Lydenburg, was ambushed. The escort probably protected a convoy, and both were captured; probably by some of Ben Viljoen's men, as this is the district he has recently had under his protection. The major was killed, and his men surrendered.

The month ends with more captures of Boers, including two commandants who are not, however, known to fame.

Despite the sweepings of cattle, sheep, women, and children made by the French, Dartnell, Plumer, and other officers, and

heralded in the war press as important achievements, it is clear that the Boers have retaliated in attacks on trains, convoys, and escorts in Cape Colony, Natal, the Free State, and the Transvaal, in a very effective manner against the enemy during April.

In the "National Review" for May, 1901, an English military expert epitomized the progress made by the British armies in the conquest of the Orange Free State, up to the end of April, as follows :

"At present the Boers are in almost indisputable possession of all the Colony except the railway and the places on it. We have just abandoned Hoopstad, which we held since last June. Dewetsdorp has been for months a Boer center of supplies; Philippolis, Fauresmith, Petrusburg, Luckoff, and probably Smithfield, Wepener, and Rouxville, are governed by Boer Landrosts."

This survey of the situation extended to the Transvaal and Cape Colony reveals a state of things equally discouraging for the British. During the month of April Lord Kitchener organized three great "sweeping" movements in the Transvaal; one, led by General French, to operate through the eastern districts; one, under Colonel Plumer, to clear the country northeast from Nylstroom and beyond Pietersburg where the Transvaal Executive, with stores and ammunition, were located; and another, cooperating with Plumer, working north by west from the Delagoa Bay line. These forces were the best at Kitchener's disposal, and were led by the ablest of his officers. Their marches, encounters, successful rushes, captures of men, ammunition, and cattle, etc., were trumpeted from day to day in the British press with the assurances of the news agencies that the Boers were dispirited by these exhibitions of Kitchener's strength and resources, and were on the point of giving up the fight.

By the end of the month the three columns were back again from where they had started, laden with large quantities of cattle and loot, and with numbers of Boer women and children, and other non-combatants. But, no sooner had the English columns left the localities into which they had marched, than the fighting Boers were found in or near the places they had occupied before the approach of the enemy, reduced comparatively few in number. The commandoes had held off from the superior strength of the columns, and avoided direct encounters, but harassed them on their way, hung on their rear and flanks, and then resumed their various districts again after the enemy were compelled to return to where the railways gave them the only hold they have upon the country.

The fact that the Eastern Transvaal is now to be raided again,

this time by six columns, is the strongest proof of the failure of the previous "sweepings" by French and Smith-Dorrien, and of the movements anterior to these in which other generals figured. Botha was already, once again, at Ermelo, at the end of April.

In Cape Colony operations have taken a somewhat similar course. The various commandoes have held more or less to the districts in or near to which they penetrated three months ago. They have refused decisive engagements by breaking into small sections, when superior forces came near, and joined again in a neighboring locality when the enemy went back to the railway. Kritzinger has been the most active of the invading Commandants during the past month, and has scored in frequent skirmishes with patrols and escorts. Hertzog still remains in the northwestern regions, where he has a country almost as large as France to roam over, and from whence he can supply fresh horses to De Wet and his men in the Free States.

May 1-7.—The month of May opens for Cape Colony with the item of news that "fighting is almost of daily occurrence."

It would appear from the latest accounts regarding the doings of General Babington's column round Klerksdorp, southwest of Johannesburg, that his victory over De la Rey on the 24th of April, at Kaffir Kraal, was greatly exaggerated in the press. On the 28th of the same month, "large Boer forces" were reported to be laagered at Haartebeestfontein, in the same locality, while on the 4th of May it was cabled that Babington had been "heavily engaged" with De la Rey. Language like this, in news from Pretoria to the English press, is frequently found, in the light of later accounts, to relate to occurrences which the Boers would not admit to be defeats for their side.

General Viljoen is reported to be at Ermelo with Botha, while the news agencies are again distributing De Wet over widely separated areas. His latest place of activity is said to be Harrismith, near the Natal border, where he is credited with having 4,000 men at his disposal.

May 8-31.—A new invading column, 800 strong, has entered Cape Colony, from the Free State, under Latigan, a native of Colesberg. They are believed to be reenforcements for Malan and Fouche, whose men are operating in the center districts of the Colony.

On the 10th of May, Commandant-General Botha addressed a letter to Lord Kitchener expressive of his desire to see the war brought to an end, and requesting to know whether the British Commander-in-Chief would facilitate the passage through the English lines of two messengers or deputies from Botha who would

proceed to Europe to consult with President Kruger. Lord Kitchener replied in a few days, declining to do anything that would seem a recognition on his part of Mr. Kruger's status; saying he could only negotiate through Boer leaders in the field. He, however, intimated that he would ask the English Government to allow any message Botha might desire to send to Mr. Kruger to be forwarded direct. A message was sent in this manner, the terms of which have not been made public.

In due course, the following reply reached General Botha and Mr. Schalk Burger from Presidents Kruger and Steyn, and was circulated among the laagers in the two Republics:

"The Governments of the South African Republic and Orange Free State, with the advice of the said chief officers, and taking into consideration the satisfactory report of his Honor State President Kruger, and the deputation in the foreign country, and considering the good progress of our cause in the Colonies, where our brothers oppose the cruel injustice done to the Republics more and more in depriving them of their independence, considering further the invaluable personal and material sacrifices they have made for our cause, which would all be worthless and vain with a peace whereby the independence of the Republics is given up, and further considering the certainty that the losing of our independence after the destruction already done and losses suffered will drag with it the national and material annihilation [?] of the entire people, and especially considering the spirit of unbending persistence with which the great majority of our men, women, and children are still possessed, and in which we see with thankful acknowledgment the hand of the Almighty Protector, resolve, that no peace will be made and no peace conditions accepted by which our independence and national existence, or the interests of our Colonial brothers, shall be the price paid, and that the war will be vigorously prosecuted by taking all measures necessary for maintenance of independence and interests."

General De Wet had issued a manifesto to the burghers in the Free State, in April, which anticipated the decision of the Federal Governments. The following is an extract:

"Brothers, do not let our belief and trust in the Lord be shaken. Many precious lives have already been sacrificed for the sake of our great cause; those lives call on us to go on. Let us not be depressed, but, like men, endure the worst, faithfully observe our duties to our country and nation, and humbly wait on the God of our fathers, who is still our God. He, at His good time, will give a joyful issue.

"Finally, I wish to observe that if I and our Government were so foolish as to accept the proposals of Lord Kitchener, I am con-

vinced that the great majority of our people, if not all, who are now fighting, would not agree; for to accept those proposals means nothing less than the complete subjection of the Afrikander people, and the subjection of a people is more bitter than to think of the death of every single burgher."

On the 23rd, General Christian Botha was reported to be in the rear of one of the six new columns engaged in again clearing the Eastern Transvaal. He was following Colonel Stewart, who was moving towards General Blood's main body, east of Standerton. Commandant Swartz, of Colenso fame, with a number of Botha's men, seems to have gone ahead of Stewart, and to have been ambushed by superior forces advancing from Blood's position to meet Stewart. He was one of the best of the secondary Boer commanders in the field, and notably distinguished himself during the Tugela campaign. It was he and Commandant Joshua Joubert who held Langwani Hill against Buller's right wing, on the 15th of December, 1899. His loss is a serious one to Botha's commandoes.

Down in the Ventersdorp district, so often visited by General Babington, Commandant Liebenberg attacked and captured a British convoy, and killed and wounded over thirty of its escort on the 23rd.

On the 25th, Kritzinger's commando attacked and captured a British post near Maraisburg, Cape Colony. Forty men surrendered.

Zeerust, in the Marico region of the Western Transvaal, is once again reported to be "besieged by the Boers."

During this month the public have learned some interesting facts about sieges of places like Zeerust, which Lord Kitchener's huge forces are believed in England to be holding with ease against the Boers. The following letter appeared in the Shields "Daily News" of the 12th inst. It refers to Hoopstad, a place mentioned several times already in this diary. It is in the northwest of the Free State, close to the Vaal River, and about seventy miles east of the Kimberley-Mafeking railway line.

"Corporal G. Donkin, of the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, at present at the front, in a letter to his uncle, Detective-sergeant Cowe, South Shields, gives an interesting description of the siege of Hoopstad.

"We have been having a very hot time of it in Hoopstad," he writes. "We have been hemmed in by the Boers on all sides, and fighting every day. We couldn't get any communication with any place, as the wires were all cut between Brandfort and Bloemfontein. We tried to get native runners through, but every one we tried was captured.

"Lord Methuen was coming to relieve us, but when he got to the Vaal River it was flooded, and he couldn't cross at any of the drifts, so he had to make for Fourteen Streams, and come round to us, so that made a difference of another month to us, and, to make things worse, we were on half rations, with no tobacco.

"All the men were smoking hay and bits of sacking steeped in nicotine. Our horses had no food whatever, only what they could pick up on the veldt. Every man was in rags. Some had sacks on for trousers. We looked a fine mob when the column arrived on the 1st of April, with Lord Erroll in command, who gave the order that Hoopstad had to be evacuated. It was welcome news in one way to us, and not in another.

"We were glad to get away to get a bit of food and to be newly fitted out, but still it was hard after holding it so long, and fighting so hard, and also taking into account the men we had lost, to leave it with no troops in it. It was like giving the Boers the best of it."

For several months this garrison had held out, with never a word from Lord Kitchener about the plight to which it was reduced by Boers who were represented in the English press as being hunted, dispirited, and broken from one end of the Free State to the other. If Hoopstad only had a defender with the journalistic instincts of a Baden-Powell, the world would have heard something of its garrison during these two hundred and forty days. I have been unable to discover who the Boer officer was who commanded during this long siege. Dr. Baumann was Landrost of Hoopstad in April, 1900. He traveled with me from Kroonstad to a place midway between the two towns when I visited Colonel Villebois-Mareuil, at the end of March. He was not, however, at that time, a fighting Boer. Several of the leading burghers of Hoopstad, who were attached to General Cronje's command, surrendered at Paardeberg. Probably Generals Kolbe and Du Toit, who took part in the investment of Kimberley up to the raising of the siege of that place, will be found to be the men who gave the British in Hoopstad the lively time alluded to in the above letter.

A Parliamentary return relating to the farm-burning operations of the British army was issued during this month which, even on the admission of English authority, revealed the extent to which the British had deliberately violated the code of civilized warfare signed and agreed to by England at The Hague Conferences. Houses were burned, "because the owners were on commando," and for other reasons which should have secured their inviolability. The districts in which the Boers fought most stubbornly were those in which the "sweeping" columns that passed over them burned

most homes. To the eternal disgrace of the officers concerned in the shameless vandalism of the act, the home of Christian De Wet was razed to the ground, as had been already the homes or farms of Generals Philip and Louis Botha, and of scores of other Boer Commandants. No officers of any civilized nation would have treated in this manner the homes of brave Christian foemen. Despicable in every light tho the action is, it is only in accord with the traditions of the British army, whether fighting in America, Ireland, or India. No consideration of honor or of chivalry can ever be credited to the soldiery of England when the foe they are in the field against is one too weak or unwilling to resort to retaliation.

A total of 630 farms are admitted to have been thus burned, but this is obviously a number far below the extent of the actual destruction carried out. The British will be found to have devastated all the districts in the Transvaal and Free State through which their forces have passed. Soldiers, in their private letters to England, have boasted of this, and many correspondents have borne testimony, so early as August of last year, to the burning of farms and villages which was being carried out by the English troops on their lines of march at that time.

So thoroughly did the British perform their house-burning work, and so ruthlessly did they compel Boer women and children to enter the concentration camps, that Mrs. Maxwell (an American), wife of General Maxwell, the English Military Governor of Johannesburg, wrote a public appeal during this month to the friends of the Boers in the United States, in behalf of 22,000 Boer women and children, who were taken from their homes by the English and imprisoned in these enclosures. She described the women as being in "a wretched condition," both as to dress, food, and sleeping accommodation.

Just three years ago similar barbarous deeds were about to cause a war. Their perpetration elicited the following historic indictment:

"The efforts of Spain to suppress the insurrection have been increased by the addition to the horrors of the strife of a new and inhuman phase, happily unprecedented in the modern history of a civilized people. The peasantry, including all dwelling in the open agricultural interior, were driven into the garrison towns or isolated places held by the troops. The raising and movement of provisions were interdicted, fields were laid waste, dwellings unroofed and fired, and mills destroyed. . . . The agricultural population . . . was herded within the towns and their immediate vicinage, deprived of means of support, rendered destitute of

shelter, left poorly clad, and exposed to most insanitary conditions. . . . From month to month the death rate increased to an alarming ratio. . . . The reconcentration, adopted avowedly as a war measure to cut off the resources of the insurgents, worked its predestined result. It was extermination. The only peace it could beget was that of the wilderness and the grave. . . . A long trial has proved that the object for which Spain has waged the war cannot be attained. The fire of insurrection may flame or may smolder with varying seasons, but it has been and it is plain that it cannot be extinguished by the present methods. . . . In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization . . . the war in Cuba must stop."—President McKinley's Message to Congress, April, 1898.

There was one horror, however, which General Weyler did not resort to in the methods of warfare which brought upon Spain the retribution that deprived her of Cuba and the Philippines. The Spanish general did not arm savages against the Cubans, or employ them in his plan of campaign as auxiliaries, as Lords Roberts and Kitchener have done.

On the 18th of May, the following despatch was published in the London press:

"Durban, May 17, 1901.

"Mr. Brunner, member of the Natal Legislative Assembly for the Eshowo District, writes as follows to the Natal 'Mercury':

"'Steps have been taken, with the cognizance of the highest military authorities in the country, to let loose the natives upon their already demoralized enemy, permission being given to them to loot and plunder.

"'The natives of Zululand have been instructed by the military officers to arm and invade the Vryheid districts. Thousands of head of Boer cattle were brought in and handed over to Colonel Bottomley, and the Zulus were allowed 10 per cent. of all the plunder.

"'As a result of this action the Dinizulu and Zsibepu tribes are again on the war-path.'

"Mr. Brunner also publishes a telegram of protest sent to the Premier of Natal, and what is stated to be the latter's reply, to the effect that he had sent protest after protest to the military authorities, but that he believed that Colonel Bottomley had greatly exceeded the instructions given in the original order.—Reuter."

As repeatedly shown in this volume, facts accumulate in the progress of the war proving that the employment of savages has been continuous and systematic by the British from the commencement; as armed scouts, for the defense of garrisons, for cattle-

raiding, and for other military purposes. And this, too, in face of the solemn undertaking, given in the House of Commons by Mr. Balfour on the eve of the war, that no colored auxiliaries—not even Indian native troops—would be employed by the British during hostilities. And, when these armed Kaffirs are caught looting and acting as armed scouts and spies, and shot in consequence by the Boers, the English who have so armed these savages accuse the Boers of "murdering natives"!

A battle was fought at Vlakfontein between General Kemp of De la Rey's commandoes, and the enemy's troops under General Dixon on the 29th of May, and is reported on the 1st of June. Vlakfontein is in the Lichtenburg country, south of De la Rey's birthplace. De la Rey, according to the reports of the enemy, had suffered a severe defeat at the hands of General Babington in the latter end of March, when he lost the whole of his artillery. His chief lieutenant's attack on Dixon's troops was therefore a double surprise. Dixon's force consisted of 1,500 men, with seven guns. The British were returning to camp after burning burgher farms, when Kemp and his men rushed the rear-guard of the English column, and captured two guns. The Derbyshire Regiment and some Yeomanry were in charge of these guns. They gave way before the rush of the Boers; that is, the Yeomen did. The remainder of Dixon's force wheeled back and engaged their assailants when, according to Lord Kitchener, these were driven off. The official British losses are given as 6 officers and 51 men killed; 6 officers and 115 men wounded; and 1 officer and 7 men missing. Four more men died later of their wounds. Kemp's reputed loss, according to Kitchener, was 41 Boers killed. Lord Kitchener estimates Kemp's attacking force at 1,200. No English report ever reduces the numbers engaged on the Boer side. The tendency always is to exaggerate those which attack.

The usual calumnies against the Boers when they succeed in inflicting a "mishap" on their enemies, were repeated by the Jingo press on the authority of Lord Kitchener's "rumors" that some of the British wounded had been killed by their victors at Vlakfontein. One sensational story alleged that surrendered gunners were shot for refusing to "instruct" their Boer captors how to use the guns which Kemp's men had taken. The patent absurdity of this story was its best refutation. It was found, however, that when Brigadier-General Dixon's official report of the disaster was published by the War Office there was no reference whatever to the alleged ill-usage of wounded by the burghers.

It would appear that the temporarily captured guns had been in the charge of some Yeomen in Dixon's command, and that these

troops had not, to put it mildly, exhibited a fight-to-a-finish disposition in the encounter. The libels upon the Boers naturally emanated from those who had been whipped by them.

The following unbiased testimony disposes of these calumnies once again, and does honor to those other English soldiers who can manfully do justice to their foes:

The London "Standard," July 12, 1901, published a letter dated July 11, signed "Without Prejudice," in which the writer said:

"On reading the terrible accounts of the ill-treatment of the wounded at Vlakfontein, I feel impelled to send you some extracts from a letter written by my son, a Yeoman, who was wounded in that engagement."

Not a word in the wounded Yeoman's account of the battle related to outrages by Boers. On the contrary he declared that "The Dutchmen were very decent in their behavior."

On the 12th of July, 1901, the Belper "News" published a letter from Private Victor Booth, 1st Devonshire Regiment, from Naauwpoort Nek, in which he told the story of the Vlakfontein fight. He charged the Yeomen "with not fighting like men. They ran away from the guns." His only references to the wounded being injured were in these words:

"A good many of the wounded were awful burnt, as the enemy set fire to the veldt. We had to get away the best we could in the night, and had to march twenty miles, as the enemy were too strong for us."

The veldt was fired by the Boers for the purposes of their attack during the battle.

Another account of the same engagement was given in a letter written by Private S. Davey, 1st Battalion Sherwood Fusiliers, also written from Naauwpoort Nek, and published in the Rushcliffe "Advertiser" on the 12th of July, 1901. He, too, relates how the Yeomen "retired," leaving two guns within 500 yards of the Boers. He gives a spirited account of the gallant efforts made to retake the guns, and how dozens of men were shot down in the attempt; eighty-nine of his regiment being killed and wounded before the cannon were recovered. He made no allusion whatever to any ill-treatment of the wounded by the Boers.

Writing to the "Daily News," Mr. Patrick McCue, Poor Law Guardian, Sunderland, quoted a letter from his son, a private in the Derbyshire Regiment, in which he said (referring to Vlakfontein):

"The Boers behaved like men, never shooting when they could

take prisoners, and even apologized because they had to take our rifles and ammunition."

Private McCue added the illuminating comment upon the foul charges made by the "retiring" Yeomen against their foes, that "we captured thirty of the enemy. One had explosive ammunition and was accordingly shot."

June 1-8.—It was reported that three engagements between small bodies of combatants had occurred in Cape Colony. Near Dordrecht, close to the Orange River, a detachment of Yeomanry was captured and subsequently released.

General Ben Viljoen attacked a convoy escorted by 1,000 troops and two guns, and fought a running combat for two days with them, pursuing them close to Standerton, on the Pretoria-Natal line. The English reports speak of the determined character of the Boer attack; Viljoen's men riding to within fifty yards of the guns in attempts to capture them. This, it may be added, took place in the district over which six columns set out, early last month, "to sweep" off human beings and food, for the fifth time.

News of the relief of Zeerust was published at this time. Lord Methuen's forces had forced the Boers to raise the siege, which had continued "for months." No information about the plight of the garrison had been given to the public before the announcement of Methuen's arrival before the town.

Lord Kitchener reported that Jamestown, Cape Colony, had surrendered to Kritzinger's commando on the morning of the 2nd of June, after four hours' fighting. The garrison were subsequently released.

Tidings of a "dashing British victory" was published the same time in the London press. Four hundred Boers, under Commandant Beyers, were attacked by 240 British, under Colonel Wilson at Warmbaths, in the Transvaal. The report related details as follows:

"Colonel Wilson, commanding the 2nd Kitchener's Scouts, hearing that Commandant Beyers had sent an advance commando north in charge of all his supplies preparatory to his retirement with his main force, made a wide turning movement, and came within sight of the Boers thirty-four miles west of Warmbaths. The Boers were outspanning and were unconscious of the vicinity of the British troops. Colonel Wilson attacked at daybreak. We captured 8,000 cattle, and 18 wagons. All the supplies which could not be taken away were burned.

"After the Boers fled, the main commando was sighted, and the British retired, getting away with all their captures, in spite of attempts to retake them. The prisoners taken numbered, including

a few native followers, one hundred. The Boers abandoned their ambulance in their flight. As the result of this engagement, Commandant Beyers has been left practically without transport and supplies.—REUTER."

Cabled to by the Secretary for War for a confirmation of this brilliant performance, Lord Kitchener replied as follows :

"Lord Kitchener, in reply to a telegram from the Secretary of State for War respecting the alleged surprise of General Beyers' commando, states that the report is without foundation."

On the 6th, De Wet was reported as being attacked while with a large convoy, near Reitz, in the northeast of the Free State. General Elliot, in command of one of General Rundle's "sweeping" columns, came up with the Chief Commandant and engaged him. The fight was a stubborn one, and resulted, according to the enemy's reports, in the capture of the convoy, and in the killing of seventeen, and the wounding of three Boers—an incongruous list of casualties; the English acknowledging a loss of 20 killed and of 24 wounded.

A few days later, a report came from Berlin that the encounter was, in reality, a victory for De Wet. The account being as follows:

"De Wet made a successful attack on the morning of the 6th of June on Elliot's Brigade between Lindley and Reitz, and forced Elliot back to Lindley. The English losses were 4 officers and 26 men killed; 5 officers and 53 men wounded, some prisoners, transport wagons, and a large number of cattle."

Fighting near Jacobsdal, west of the Free State, and several other minor engagements are reported between the 3rd and the 7th inst.

One report locates Judge Hertzog and George Brand at Petrusburg, where they are said to have been "peacefully occupied for two months." Petrusburg is midway on the road from Bloemfontein to Kimberley, and too near the large British garrisons of these two cities to lend credence to the truth of this report. Petrusville, in the northwest of Cape Colony, is probably the resting-place of the two Commandants and their forces.

I have learned from a German source an account of a remarkable encounter which occurred near Heilbron, in De Wet's country, on the 7th inst. A son of General Philip Botha's, probably Charles, in company with eleven other Boers were patrolling with a pom-pom, which was in charge of Lieutenant Strydum. They came in sight of a British column—one of four engaged under General

Rundle in sweeping the northeast of the Free State at the time. It was estimated to be 2,000 strong, and had six light guns. Botha and Strydum took up position on a ridge, and began an attack on the column, at 5,000 yards' range; Strydum running his pom-pom

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from one position to another, under cover of the ridge, and creating thereby the impression that the Boers had the service of two guns. The dozen burghers held the British column for four hours, killed some of the enemy, and then wheeled off with men and gun unscathed.

June 8–15.—Reuter's correspondent at Johannesburg has cabled an apology to the press on the 10th for having published the report which charged the Boers of General Kemp's commando with shooting British wounded at the battle of Vlakfontein.

The British surprised two Boer laagers in Cape Colony, and captured 42 prisoners, and 15,000 rounds of ammunition. Localities not specified in the reports.

Lord Kitchener cabled on June 15 as follows:

"Near Welmansrust, twenty miles south of Middelburg (ninety miles east of Pretoria), 250 Mounted Victorian Rifles, of General Beaston's column, were surprised in camp by a superior force of Boers at 7.30 P.M. on the 12th of June. The enemy crept up to within a short range and poured a deadly fire into the camp, killing 2 officers and 16 men, and wounding 4 officers and 38 men. Only 2 officers and 50 men escaped to General Beatson's camp. The remainder were taken prisoner and released. Two pom-poms were captured by the enemy."

These Boers would be Viljoen men.

Murraysburg, in the very center of Cape Colony, was captured and occupied by a force of Kritzinger's commando on the 13th.

June 16–30.—A body of Colonial Mounted Rifles were out in the Craddock region of Cape Colony in search of Commandant Malan. Kritzinger was in search of the pursuers, came up with them while they were off-saddled, attacked them, and made the survivors prisoners, after a two hours' fight. Fourteen British were killed and wounded; 66 being captured and then released.

A fight which lasted for twelve hours has taken place at Richmond in Cape Colony. The town was held by a force of the North Staffordshire Militia, under Captain Hawkshaw, and was attacked by Commandant Malan. After a prolonged combat the Boers withdrew, on learning of the approach of British reenforcements.

It has been reported that fully 6,000 young Dutchmen of Cape Colony, farmers' sons, had joined the invading Boer forces since Hertzog, Malan, Kritzinger, Scheepers, Brand, and other Commandants had carried the war again across the Orange River.

Near the end of the month news agencies represented General Botha as falling back before the (fifth) "sweeping" movement of the British, in the southeastern Transvaal; adding that "his surrender is hourly expected."

Chapter XXXVIII

DIARY OF THE WAR—JULY TO DECEMBER, 1901

LOCATION OF THE BOER GENERALS—KITCHENER'S "SWEEPING MOVEMENTS"—CLOSE CALL OF PRESIDENT STEYN—KITCHENER BANISHES ALL BOER LEADERS—"MR. DOOLEY" ON KITCHENER'S "RULES OF WAR"—"MURDERED" PEACE ENVOY COMES TO LIFE—BRITISH FIGHT AT GRASPAN UNDER COVER OF BOER WOMEN—STEYN REPLIES TO KITCHENER'S PROCLAMATION—"YOUR JURISDICTION EXTENDS ONLY AS FAR AS YOUR EXCELLENCY'S CANNON CAN REACH"—LOTTER CAPTURED—KITCHENER'S "BAG"—BRILLIANT BRITISH VICTORY OVER YOUNG GIRLS—VICTORIES OF DE LA REY, BOTHA, SMUTS, KRITZINGER, AND GROBLAAR—ZULUS EMPLOYED BY BRITISH IN DEFENSE OF FORT PROSPECT AND ITALA—THE "MOVABLES" OF A BRITISH MOBILE COLUMN—THE BRITISH "BLOODY ASSIZES"—LOTTER HANGED—SCHEEPERS CAPTURED IN HOSPITAL—DE WET KILLED AGAIN—BULLER TALKS TOO MUCH AND IS REMOVED—CANON GORE ON CONCENTRATION CAMPS—CHAMBERLAIN'S COMPARISON OF BRITISH AND GERMAN SOLDIERS ENRAGES GERMANS—BOTHA'S SLASHING VICTORY AT BRAKENLAAGTE—COOKED REPORTS OF BRITISH WAR OFFICE—MISS HOBHOUSE TELLS TRUTH ABOUT CONCENTRATION CAMPS—IS FORCIBLY DEPORTED—KRITZINGER CAPTURED—HAASBROEK KILLED—HOW DE WET "LAID IN" HIS CHRISTMAS SUPPLIES.

July 1-31.—The diary of events during this month might be summarized in a sentence: large "sweeping" movements by Kitchener's many columns, in the Transvaal, Free State, and Cape Colony; with the double object of cornering commandoes and capturing stock; with very little success against the armed Boers, but with considerable results in the seizure of cattle, horses, and wagons. The Federal Commandants played a watching and waiting game. The winter season urges such a plan upon leaders, whose men are neither too well fed nor too warmly clad; men, also, who have, in most cases, been fighting with their officers almost incessantly since October, 1899. The grass, too, drinks deeply of the winter rains in South Africa, and crops have to be sown and looked to in places where the non-combatants have all been swept into the concentration camps. Boer plans, therefore, called for the splitting up of commandoes into small laagers, and for the distribution of men over wide areas in the avoidance of conflicts with the big battalions of the enemy.

The chief Boer Commandants were located as follows for their

winter campaign: in the extreme east of the Transvaal (north of the Krokodil River, and thence northwestward, through the Lydenburg regions, on to Pietersburg), General Viljoen and Commandant Muller had their laagers distributed. Westward, and north of Middelburg, Colonel Trichardt (a native of Middelburg, and head of the Transvaal Artillery in the earlier stages of the war) formed a connecting link between Viljoen, on the one hand, and the northern commandoes in the Olifants River districts on the other. Southeastward, on the Swaziland border, General Tobias Smuts was in connection with Viljoen's left, with the Delagoa Bay railway and its English posts in between. South of Smuts, Commandant Groblaar extended the broken line of Boer resistance on to Christian Botha and Commandant Opperman, south of Standerton; while the Commandant-General and his brother-in-law, General Cherrie Emmet, were holding the extreme southeastern angle of the Transvaal, in between Natal and Zululand.

In the western Transvaal, De la Rey remained almost inactive in the country between Rustenburg and Lichtenburg. His able lieutenant, General Beyers, formed a slender link from Warmbad, northeastward, with Trichardt and Muller, while Commandants Kemp, Smuts, Liebenberg, Van Heerden, and others were in their usual sphere of activity and observation, west of the Magaliesberg Hills, and on the north bank of the Vaal as far as Wolmaranstad.

In the Free State, General De Wet was in his own country, in the northeast, but revealed himself very little in action during this time. His principal Commandants, Froneman, Nel, Haasbroek, Alberts, Strydum, Van Niekirk, with George Brand who had returned from Cape Colony, carried the chain of defensive observation south to the borders of Cape Colony, with big breaks in the line. In the west of the Free State, small bodies under Badenhorst, Erasmus, De Villiers, Van Zyl, Kolbe, and Conroy operated from the Hoopstad district across into Griqualand, while Myburg, Van den Berg, and others did the same from the Boshof region south to the Orange River.

In Cape Colony the situation was one which would best be described as of varying uniformity. Malan and Fouche were in the eastern districts, pursued in the usual way by troops who failed to drive them back to the Free State. In the center regions, Kritzinger remained in command until Attorney-General Smuts (now military general) left De la Rey's commandoes and assumed the direction of the campaign hitherto carried on by Kritzinger. Commandants Scheepers, Lotter, Smit, Latigan, Marais, and others formed links with widely-divided gaps across the colony with Hertzog in the far western regions of the Cape.

Against these dispositions of Boer forces, Kitchener continued his plan of "sweeping" columns, along with the further erection of blockhouses for the protection of railways and the corralling of commandoes within certain areas. In Cape Colony General French had the chief direction of such forces and operations as the continued presence of the invading Boers demanded.

The fighting for the month began in a dozen small encounters in Cape Colony between the invading bands and their assailants. There were few casualties on either side; the Boers evading planned attacks, as if they were well informed of the movements of French's forces.

On the 4th, at Naboomspruit, some of Beyers' men blew up a train carrying British troops north from Pretoria to Pietersburg, killing nine of their enemies. On the 12th a British post south of the Vaal, on the line to Kroonstad, was stormed and taken by a force probably under Alberts and Strydum. An old seven-pound gun was also taken, and there were a dozen British casualties. Ben Viljoen attacked and demolished a blockhouse, about the same time, in his eastern district, but did not carry off the defenders.

On the 13th, General Broadwood, who was engaged in "sweeping" the northeastern Free State district around the town of Reitz, doubled back on his march during the night-time by a circuitous route, and succeeded in surprising President Steyn and members of his Government who had come into the place in the wake of the English column; believing that Broadwood was passing in a direct march north to Heilbron. There were only a few burghers with the President, and the surprise was so complete that he escaped half-dressed, according to the English reports, while Generals A. Cronje (of Winburg) and Wessels, Mr. Steyn's brother-in-law, and about thirty other persons were captured. Some State papers and a sum of money also fell into English hands.

General Andries Cronje has a good record in the war. He fought in the Natal campaign with De Wet, and was with him in the battles of Reitfontein and Nicholson's Nek. He also campaigned with De Wet when he was transferred from Natal to join General P. Cronje's forces at Magersfontein, and was one of the many officers who tried, in vain, to induce his more illustrious namesake to cross the Modder River, to the south, after commencing his retreat on Bloemfontein, and join forces with De Wet and Philip Botha before Roberts' legions could have time to bar the way to the Free State capital.

General Wessels had the command of the Free State forces in front of Kimberley for a couple of months after the war began, but, on finding that younger and more capable men were required

for the task of handling large commandoes, he patriotically requested to be relieved of his responsibility, and was superseded. These captures are of little importance from a military point of view, as both generals had ceased to participate in active operations.

Some of the papers found by Broadwood were subsequently published by the English, and revealed a divergence of view between President Steyn and State Secretary Reitz on the question of sending delegates to Europe to consult with President Kruger how best to open up negotiations for peace. Reitz, Botha, and Viljoen appeared (according to what purported to be a translation of a letter from Reitz to Steyn) to favor this course, in the month of May, while the Free State President was vehemently opposed to all further negotiations, and in favor of continuing the struggle against an Empire which they had humiliated before the great Powers and had punished so severely for its crime. He pleaded passionately against any surrender to a foe who knew not what honor or a loyalty to treaties meant, and called upon the leaders of the sister Republic to fight on for independence, and to trust to God and to the chance fortunes of some European complication which might aid them against the enemy. Events had already shown that this stern stand of this strong man was approved by President Kruger, and determined the question at issue.

On the 15th one of General French's columns surprised Commandant Scheepers' laager near Aberdeen, in Cape Colony, and captured thirty men, Scheepers barely escaping.

The day following this event Commandant Fouche attacked and defeated a British post near Aliwal North, killing and wounding twenty-four.

On the 20th Mrs. Kruger, wife of the Transvaal President, died in Pretoria, after a three days' illness.

During the latter half of this month the following events were reported:

A party of British were ambushed near Petrusburg, Orange Free State. Sixteen "missing." Boer force probably under Myburg.

Lord Kitchener sent this despatch from Pretoria, on the 23rd:

"A train from Cape Town, with 113 details and stores, was held up, captured and burned, eight miles north of Beaufort West (Cape Colony), on the morning of the 21st. Casualties: Three killed and 18 wounded.

"French reports that Crabbe, with 300 men, was attacked in the mountains, near Craddock, by Kritzinger at dawn. The horses stampeded. An all-day fight followed. Crabbe fell back on Mortimer."

On the same date as the mishap to the Cape Town train, a Boer

commando under General Tobias Smuts attacked the British and native garrison at Bremersdorp, in Swaziland, and captured the place after a determined resistance. The fight was reported to have lasted eight hours, the British ultimately retreating, and being followed by the Boers. The British troops were a detachment of Steinacher's Horse, and a number of Swazi allies. The enemy lost ten killed and thirty missing, not counting their Swazi comrades. The Boer casualties were reported as "heavy" by the usual Kaffir informants.

A son of the late General Philip Botha, Captain Charles Botha, and two Field Cornets were reported killed in a fight between patrols near Tafel Kop, in the Free State, only a few miles from where young Botha's home stood before it was burned.

A Parliamentary paper issued in London, July 24, gives the number of Boers in concentration camps as 14,622 men, 24,711 women, and 43,075 children. There were also 23,489 Kaffirs similarly detained.

A battle which continued for a whole day was fought at Nqutu, on the Zululand border, between a small commando under General Emmet, and a body of 200 Hussars under Colonel Henderson. The British narrowly escaped the loss of a field battery. The Boers charged the enemy's position repeatedly, and ultimately forced him to retreat.

A fight between General Walter Kitchener and General Ben Viljoen, northeast of Middelburg, is said to have resulted in the capture by the former of a pom-pom (previously taken from the English), 20 wagons of provisions, and 32 prisoners.

August 1-7.—English reports from Cape Colony say that numbers of the Boer invaders are being gradually driven north to the Orange River by General French's columns. Judge Hertzog is located at Fauresmith, in the south of the Free State. If this news is correct, he has returned after a six months' campaign in British territory, during which time he has fought dozens of engagements, and traversed hundreds of miles of the enemy's country, from whence he has sent large supplies of horses to De Wet.

Lord Kitchener issued a proclamation on the 7th, which ends:

"Now therefore I, Lord Kitchener, &c., under instructions from his Majesty's Government, proclaim and make known as follows:

"All Commandants, Field Cornets, and leaders of armed bands, being burghers of the late Republics, still engaged in resisting his Majesty's forces, whether in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal or in any other portion of his Majesty's South African Dominions, and all members of the Governments of the late Orange Free State and the late South African Republic, shall, unless they

surrender before 15th of September next, be permanently banished from South Africa; the cost of the maintenance of the families of all burghers in the field who shall not have surrendered by the 15th of September shall be recoverable from such burghers, and shall be a charge upon their property movable and immovable in the two Colonies."

This fulmination cannot reasonably be expected to frighten into submission the people to whom it is addressed, any more than they have been convinced of their defeat by the dozens of a similar kind already printed and circulated. The Boers cannot well reply in kind, as they (presumably) have no printing presses, but they will probably continue to offer all possible resistance to foes who have burned their homes, imprisoned their wives and children in concentration camps, and who are candid enough to say that they will not allow the leaders of the Boer nation to live, after the war, in their own country. When all is lost except honor, men will still fight against an enemy who knows neither honor nor magnanimity in his methods of warfare. It becomes a sacred duty to the cause of liberty to do so.

Mr. Dooley's comments upon Lord Kitchener's military proclamations and abuse of his Boer antagonists reflected non-English opinion about this period, on the British conduct of the war:

"Lord Kitchener wrote th' notice. He's a good writer. 'Ladies an' gintlemen,' he says, 'this war as a war is now over. Ye may not know it, but it's so. Ye've broke th' rules an' we give th' fight to ourselves on a foul. Th' first principle in a war again England is that th' inimy shall wear r-red or purple coats with black marks f'r to indicate th' location iv vital organs be day an' a locomotive headlight be night. They shall thin gather within aisy range an' at th' wurrud "fire" shall fall down dead. Anny remainin' standin' aftherward will be considered as spies. Shootin' back is not allowed be th' rules an' is severely discountenanced be our ladin' military authorities. Anny attimpt at concealmint is threachery. Th' scand'lous habit iv pluggin' our gallant sojers fr'm behind rocks an' trees is a breach iv internaytional law. Rethreatin' whin pursooed is wan iv our copyrighted manoovers an' all infringmints will be prosecuted. At a wurrud fr'm us th' war is over an' we own ye're counthry."

A "blockhouse" near Brandfort, Orange Free State, was rushed by a party of Boers (on the 7th) and captured after severe fighting. British loss: Seven killed and a number wounded. The Boers were probably led by Commandant Alberts.

Near the Sabi River, in the northeast Transvaal, twenty-five

men of a British mounted force were ambushed and captured. This is in the Viljoen-Muller district.

August 8–15.—Lord Kitchener reports that Andreas Wessels, the "peace" envoy whom De Wet had "shot" on the 12th of January last, has reached Kroonstad, not from the other world, but from Heilbron. It was the "murdering" of Wessels and Morgendall by the Free State Commandant-General, as truthfully described by Reuter and other Jingo news agencies, which caused the war press of London to denounce De Wet as "a murderer and ruffian," and to call for his summary punishment—when taken.

An engagement between Colonel Corringe and Commandant Kritzinger took place near Steynsburg, in the Stormberg district of Cape Colony. The Boers were reported beaten and several prisoners taken. Commandant Erasmus was reported mortally wounded in the engagement.

Vanrhynsdorp in the west Cape Colony was taken by Commandant Maritz on the 7th of this month, and the British driven out.

August 16–31.—Fifty of French's scouts were attacked and captured near Bethesda, Free State, by Commandant Haasbroek. The British surrendered to the usual "superior" forces of the Boers with, however, only one man killed and three wounded.

A Boer laager near Bronkhorstspruit (40 miles east of Pretoria) was attacked by a British force, who were driven off with a loss of twenty men in killed and wounded. Boer loss heavy, as usual, and their force superior, as always happens when a "mishap" occurs to the other side.

The London "Gazette" published a long despatch from Lord Kitchener in which he gives detailed reports of British operations from May to July. He accounts for a large number of Boers who were killed or captured, and devotes several paragraphs to a vigorous abuse of those of his foes who will persist in fighting for their country's liberty. He estimated the number of Boers still in the field, including those operating in Cape Colony, at 13,500.

He remarked, incidentally, that numbers of the Imperial Yeomanry who had been recently recruited in England, and forwarded to the seat of war, were found unable to ride or shoot on reaching their destination. On a shipload of these returned warriors reaching England later they were described as "street loafers and disease-ridden rapscallions," by a Jingo newspaper.

About the 20th Commandant Kritzinger was reported to have crossed the Orange River "with 100 followers." It is an English report, and nothing is said about what has happened to the balance of a commando which was frequently referred to as being 800 or 1,000 strong, when inflicting a "mishap" upon the British. Prob-

ably the balance of his men were Cape Volunteers who have scattered to their homes for rest after a six months' hot campaign.

General De la Rey, apparently well informed of the situation in Cape Colony, sent (Attorney-General) General Smuts with a body of 300 men to reenforce Kritzinger's commando. Smuts rode from near Potchefstroom with his small flying column in the rear of the huge sweeping movement which Lord Kitchener was having carried out at this time, and which extended almost across the Free State from east to west. Smuts' task was to ride south for 200 miles, and cross into Cape Colony while columns under Generals Hart, Knox, and Pilcher and Colonels Thorneycroft, Lord Basing, Rawlinson, Damant, and Murray were on his route, and liable to reach the Orange River before him. It was a task worthy of General De Wet, and was as successfully carried through as if the great Free Stater was in the saddle.

General Smuts formed a junction with Kritzinger in the southeastern corner of the Free State, close to Basutoland, and the latter then passed over the river again, with the men brought down from De la Rey's forces by Smuts. After this splendid bit of work, Smuts wheeled round, and made north by the Basutoland frontier, pursued by a few of the British columns. He obtained some more men in the Wepener district, doubled back past his pursuers, and rode over the Orange River into the Aliwal North district of Cape Colony by the end of the month.

Lord Kitchener reports as follows, from August 24-31:

"PRETORIA, 25 August.

"Sworn evidence has been brought to my notice by General Elliot that on 6th of June Lieutenant Mair, of the New South Wales Artillery, and Privates Harvey and Blunt were shot down at Graspan, near Reitz, after they had surrendered.

"I have forwarded to Steyn and Botha copies of these statements."

In prompt response to this message the British War Secretary cabled Kitchener:

"We understand you have as yet received no satisfactory assurances respecting the murder of our wounded at Vlakfontein.

"In view of the occurrences reported in your telegram of 25th inst., we are of opinion that you should notify by proclamation that the members of any commando by which such an outrage may be committed who may be captured and after trial proved to have been present on such an occasion, will be held guilty whether they actually committed the deed or not; that the leader of the commando will be sentenced to death, and other members of the com-

mando punished by death or less sentence, according to the degree of their complicity."

The allegation in Lord Kitchener's despatch is made over two months after the event is said to have happened; a circumstance which does not greatly tend to corroborate the facts. Similar charges were made in connection with the battle of Vlakfontein, and, tho the War Secretary repeats them in the above revengeful message, no evidence has been produced to substantiate charges which numbers of British soldiers have voluntarily declared to be unfounded.

The Boer version of the affair of the 6th of June puts quite another complexion upon the shooting of the British officer. If this statement of the case is true, Lord Kitchener's indignation is somewhat uncalled for. The story is told in the Dutch and German press, as follows:

"In a recent number of the 'Deutsche Wochenzeitung in den Niederlanden' appeared a statement made by Mrs. Cremer, 66 years old, a cousin of the late Minister for the Colonies of Holland. This lady, her daughter, and her daughter-in-law, had been removed from Graspan to the concentration camp at Kroonstad. Her eldest son, when Commandant of the Senekal commando, was killed near Thaba N'chu, and two others are prisoners of war in Ceylon. Three days after her arrival in the concentration camp at Kroonstad old Mrs. Cremer died, in consequence of the terror to which she had been exposed at Graspan. Her death, however, is no obstacle to the investigation of the truth of this affair, as all the women and children who, at that time were subjected to the same treatment, confirm the truth of the account, and may be found in the camp at Kroonstad, says the correspondent of the 'Deutsche Wochenzeitung.' The account, translated, runs thus:

"'On the 6th of June, near Graspan, in the neighborhood of Reitz, the Boers attacked the English transport, among whom were Mrs. Cremer and other Boer women and children. When some Englishmen had been wounded, and the Boers came nearer, the women were ordered to come down from the wagons and place themselves before the soldiers, who would then shoot at the approaching Boers from under their arms. There was also a soldier who fired from under the arm of Mrs. Cremer. The bullets of the Boers killed eight women and two children. When the Boers perceived this, they ceased firing, they roared like ferocious animals, ran at the circle of Englishmen with the butt-end of their guns, and, as if they were mad dogs, struck down the Tommies. But before this happened some twenty Boers at least had been killed by the English soldiers. The Boers wanted to take the wagons with the women along with them, but when they saw that a large British

force was drawing near they contented themselves with carrying off the trek oxen. They left alone the wagons with the women and children; the others were burned. In the hand-to-hand fight between the English soldiers and the Boers, one, Geradus Muller, was killed on the English side. He was a Free Stater who had served as guide to the English. His two brothers fell on the Boer side. The father of these persons felt deeply the shame brought upon him by his son Geradus.' "

The German weekly exclaims in connection with this case, that if the brother officers of the officer in command of those troops do not demand his shoulder-knots to be torn off, the fact will be an everlasting shame to the British colors.

In its number of the 12th of October, the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant" says that from an ex-prisoner, now staying in the Netherlands, they have received a confirmation of the account published by the "Deutsche Wochenzeitung" of the crime committed by the English at Graspan, in the Orange Free State, on the Boer women and children. This ex-prisoner also, heard from the late Mrs. Cremer herself this account in the very same words, which at the time was confirmed by her fellow-prisoners who had been present when the crime was committed.

Lord Kitchener has cabled from Pretoria news of the following mishap:

"Three officers and sixty-five men who were sent north of Ladybrand (Orange Free State), on the right of Elliot's columns, were surrounded on unfavorable ground and captured by a superior force. One man was killed and four were wounded. The prisoners were released. Am holding an inquiry."

This British force was composed of the Black Watch who were so badly cut up at Magersfontein. The attack in this instance was led by De Wet in person, and was the only action in which he has taken part since June. Kitchener likewise reported that he had received "a long, argumentative statement from Mr. Steyn" in reply to the last proclamation of the English Commander-in-Chief.

It is a long statement, truly, but it was the only occasion which this truly great leader has availed of since war was declared for the vindication of himself and his heroic little State for their self-sacrificing resolution to meet a possible Sedan for their country and liberty rather than desert the sister Republic in her life or death struggle against the British Empire.

The letter was as follows:

"15th August, 1901.

"Your Excellency,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 6th of August, 1901, enclosing the proclamation

of even date. The not unfriendly tone of your letter encourages me to reply somewhat at length to your Excellency's writing. I have noted that not only by you in your letter, but also by responsible statesmen on your side, it is affirmed that the declaration of war by the South African Republic and the invasion of British territory were the cause of the war. I hardly consider it necessary to remind you that in 1895, when the South African Republic was unarmed and at peace, trusting that her neighbors were civilized nations, an unexpected attack was made on her from British territory. I consider it unnecessary to point out to you that when this foolish undertaking (which could only have been undertaken by a man who had become insane through his vanity) failed, and all fell into the hands of the South African Republic, the Government of the South African Republic, relying on the sense of justice of the English nation, handed over all the persons taken prisoners by them, and deserving of death according to international law, to her Majesty's Government. I do not consider it necessary to point out to you that when a just judge sentenced the leaders of the expedition to imprisonment the principal men were not kept in prison till they had served their time, but were released on some trivial cause or other before the expiration of their term. I do not wish to remind your Excellency that when a Parliamentary Commission was appointed to examine into the cause and reason of the above-mentioned expedition that Commission, instead of examining into the case, kept back certain evidence, and when the Commission, in spite of the great influence which was brought to bear on them during the Session, found the chief conspirators and Mr. Rhodes guilty and reported them as such to the Parliament, Mr. Chamberlain, who was one of the members of the Commission, defended Mr. Rhodes in direct opposition to his own report. Your Excellency must admit that the South African Republic, like the civilized world, had the perfect right to come to the conclusion that the Jameson Raid, which we at first thought had been undertaken by irresponsible persons, was not unknown to her Majesty's Government, at least not to all of them. I do not wish to remind you that since that time not only has no reasonable compensation been paid out to the South African Republic, as was promised at that time, but she has been constantly bothered with despatches and threats concerning her internal government. I need not remind your Excellency how outside influence was also made use of in getting up petitions to her Majesty concerning alleged grievances, in order to give her Majesty's Government the desired opportunity for meddling with the internal policy of the South African Republic.

"When in the course of 1899 troops were massed on the borders not only of the South African Republic, but also of the hitherto friendly Orange Free State, and when it became evident to the South African Republic that the English did not desire the removal

of the grievances, which are now declared on all hands never to have existed, but the destruction of the independence of the above-named Republics, she desired the British Government to withdraw the troops from her borders, and to have all disputes settled by arbitration. This happened three weeks after the British Government had issued its ultimatum, and about a month after the Government of the Orange Free State had received a telegram from the High Commissioner asking her to remain neutral, thereby distinctly proving that the British Government was determined to wage war against the South African Republic. This telegram was sent to the Orange Free State, tho it was well known that the Orange Free State had entered into a defensive treaty with the South African Republic in 1897. When the South African Republic decided to guard her borders against the enemy who lay there in the vicinity, I was obliged to take one of the most painful steps to me—viz., to break the ties of friendship which existed between us and the British Government, and to be true to our treaty and stand by the South African Republic. That we were perfectly justified in our belief that the British Government was firmly resolved to wipe out the two Republics has been proved distinctly since the war broke out. It has not only been proved by documents which have fallen into our hands, from which it is distinctly evident that since 1896 (that is, since the Jameson Raid) the British Government was firmly resolved to invade both Republics; but only lately it was acknowledged by Lord Lansdowne that he had, as early as June, 1899, discussed with Lord Wolseley, then Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's forces, as to the best time for invading the two Republics. Your Excellency will thus see that we did not draw the sword, but that we only pushed away the sword that was already laid at our throats. We only acted in self-defense, one of the holiest rights of man, in order to maintain our existence; and for that reason I consider, with all due reverence, that we have the right to trust in a righteous God.

"I further note that your Excellency again refers to the impossibility of intervention by some foreign Power or other, and you make it appear that we are only continuing the struggle in the hope of this intervention. With your Excellency's permission, I wish to explain clearly our position as regards intervention. It is this. We have hoped, and still hope, that the moral feeling of the civilized world would oppose the crime that England is perpetrating here in South Africa—viz., that she is trying to destroy the existence of a young nation—yet we were always fully determined, if that hope was not destined to be realized, to exert our utmost power in opposition, with firm confidence in a merciful God, and that is still our unchangeable resolve to-day.

"I also note that your Excellency takes it for granted that our struggle is hopeless. I do not know on what grounds you base this opinion; but let us compare for a moment our mutual conditions

at the present time and a year ago, after the surrender of General Prinsloo. A year ago, the Cape Colony was altogether peaceful and free from our commandoes; the Orange Free State was almost wholly in your hands, not only the principal towns, railways, and other villages, but also the whole country except where Commandant Haasbroek was with his commandoes. In the South African Republic it was the same; it was almost altogether in your hands, except where General De la Rey was with his commandoes, and where General Botha was with his, far in the Boschveld. At present the Cape Colony is, so to say, covered by our commandoes, and they are in temporary possession of the greater part of the Cape Colony, where they move about as they wish and where they are joined by many of our kindred and others, who thus oppose themselves to the gross injustice carried on against the Republics. I willingly admit that in the Orange Free State your Excellency is in possession of the capital, the railway, and a few villages not situated on the railway line, but this is all that you possess. The whole Orange Free State, with the exception of the above, is in our possession, and in almost all the chief towns we have appointed Landrosts, or where the town is not in our possession we have Landrosts in the districts so that order and peace are maintained by us and not by your Excellency. In the Transvaal this is also the case. There, too, Landrosts, etc., are appointed by that Government and provision made for the maintenance of order and peace. If your Excellency will permit me, your jurisdiction extends only as far as your Excellency's cannon can reach.

"If your Excellency views the Republics from a military standpoint, then you must acknowledge that during the last year, in spite of the overwhelming force brought against us, our cause has progressed wonderfully, and there can be no talk of hopelessness, so that if your proclamation is based on this it has now less right to exist than a year ago. Now, as regards the 35,000 men whom your Excellency asserts to have in your hands, it is impossible for me to say anything about them as regards number. This, however, I wish to say, that except those men who either have been misled from their duty to their Government by your predecessor's proclamations, or who have gone over to the enemy on account of a spirit of treachery, or for other reasons, and who, thank God, are comparatively few in number, the remainder consists of those who have been honestly taken prisoners, and are still held as such, and old and sickly men and young boys who were not yet fit for service, and who were taken by force from their farms by your Excellency's troops and confined in camps against their will. It cannot, therefore, be expected of us to believe in earnest that the persons falling under these last two heads are living there in peace of their own free will. I can in truth affirm that, except the prisoners of war and the few who have gone over to the enemy, the great majority of the fighting burghers are still in arms. As regards the few who

have gone over to the enemy (which hardly ever happens now), I can only say that we do not stand alone in that respect, for history teaches us that in all wars for independence, as the American war, for instance, there have been such, and we can only try to go on without them. As regards the 74,000 women and children, who, according to your Excellency, are being maintained in the camps, it seems to me that your Excellency does not know in what a barbarous way these poor defenseless people were torn from their homes by your forces, while all their property and goods were destroyed; so that these poor innocent victims of the war, at the approach of a hostile force, would flee in all weathers, at all hours of the day or night, from place to place, in order not to fall into their hands. . . . To say that they are in camps of their own free will is altogether opposed to the facts, and to assert that these women were brought to the camps because the Boers refused to provide for their families (as the Minister for War is said to have done recently in the Parliament), is a slander which wounds us less than the slanderer.

"As regards the proclamation itself, I can assure your Excellency that for myself it will make no difference to me in the fulfilment of my duty, such as my conscience and the enemy dictate, faithfully to the end. Our country is ruined, our homes and goods destroyed, our cattle carried off or killed in thousands, our women and children captured, insulted, and carried into captivity by soldiers and low Kaffirs, and hundreds of them have already sacrificed their lives for the liberty of their fatherland. Shall we, can we now draw back from doing our duty, when our persons are threatened with banishment? Shall we now break our faith with the hundreds of dead and prisoners who, relying on our fidelity, willingly gave their lives and their liberty for the fatherland? Or shall we become untrue to our trust in a righteous God, who has hitherto preserved us in such a wonderful manner? I am convinced that if we were to act thus we would be despised, not only by your Excellency and every other honest man, but also by ourselves. I will conclude with assuring you that no one is more anxious than myself to see peace restored, and I am therefore prepared to meet your Excellency at any time in order to discuss terms with you whereby peace may be brought about. But that you may not be misled I must repeat that no peace will be acceptable to us in which the independence of the two Republics and the interests of our Cape Colony brothers who have joined us are not maintained. If it is a crime to fight in self-defense, and if such crime must be punished, then I think that his Majesty's Government ought to be satisfied with the destruction of the country, the chastisement of women and children, and the general misery which has been caused by this war. It is in your Excellency's power, more than in that of any other man, to make an end to this war, and by so doing to restore this unhappy part of the country to its former prosperity.

"We ask for no magnanimity; we only demand justice.

"I enclose a translation of this writing, so that your Excellency may not be prevented from understanding the exact contents of my letter through a wrong translation, as was recently the case with a letter which I wrote to the Government of the S. A. Republic, and which fell into your hands at Reitz, and was published by you, but in such a way that we hardly recognized it, for not only was it quite wrongly translated in some places, but sentences were added which I have never written, and other parts were left out altogether, so that quite a wrong interpretation was given to the letter. I have the honor to be, your Excellency's obedient servant,

"(Signed) M. T. STEYN,
"State President of the Orange Free State."

A British convoy, west of Kimberley, in charge of Imperial Yeomanry was attacked and captured by Commandant Conroy on the 28th, when 9 of the English were killed and 23 wounded.

De la Rey had a running fight with Lord Methuen's rear-guard north of Klerksdorp, as the titled Guardsman was moving on that town with another "sweeping" of wagons and cattle, on the 31st.

September 1–30.—The passing of the winter and the resentment caused by Lord Kitchener's outlawry decrees roused the Boer Commandants to renewed activity in September. The enemy had played all the havoc possible with whatever property in crops, cattle, or homesteads had previously escaped the work of his columns during June, July, and August. They had taken away even the Kaffirs' cattle, and destroyed their mealie crops so as to devastate completely the Transvaal and Free State, and it was over this howling wilderness of ruin that the now slender commandoes were once again to engage the British whenever a chance for a blow presented itself.

Early in the month a provision train was destroyed within twenty miles of Pretoria, with 9 killed and 17 wounded of the enemy. From the Free State and Cape Colony reports of casual encounters increased, and the published casualty lists showed that the Boers were not wasting much of their ammunition.

On the 5th, Commandant Lotter with 130 men was attacked by a large British force, and was taken after as plucky a fight as a brave man ever made. He lost 19 killed, and had over 50 wounded before his small commando gave in. Last month a British force, not much less in number than Lotter's, held up their hands to De Wet on losing one man killed and four wounded; a circumstance which induced Lord Kitchener to order an immediate inquiry. Lotter was surprised early in the morning, and was so overmatched in numbers and guns that the enemy only had 20 casualties in the

unequal encounter. This is the first really effective blow struck by General French at the second Boer invasion of Cape Colony. It will naturally tend to discourage recruiting for the commandoes in this district of the Cape.

Lord Kitchener in sending his usual weekly despatch to the War Office, spoke of the enemy still facing his legions as follows:

"PRETORIA, 9th September.

"Since 2nd of September columns have again got good results. Total bag, including all separately reported, being 681, composed of 67 Boers killed, 67 wounded, 384 prisoners, 163 surrenders, also 179 rifles, 65,211 rounds small-arm ammunition, 371 wagons, 3,400 horses, 9,000 cattle, and various other stocks captured."

"Total bag!" This chivalrous language recalls that of the officers who boasted of their "pig-sticking" at Elandslaagte, when relating the daring feats of the Lancers who had killed wounded and surrendered Boers. One searches in vain throughout the records of the whole war to find a word or a phrase on the part of a Boer Commandant, in speaking of the British, that can be called brutal. But, the Boer generals are Christians and gentlemen.

Colonel Scobell, who defeated Lotter, has been promptly promoted. He fought and won his victory with six men to one.

The first casualty lists published by the War Office after Kitchener's last "bag" speak of fighting at fifteen different places, between the 2nd and the 9th. Death, too, has its "bags" of British, as well as the Commander-in-Chief his complement of Boers and cattle.

On the 11th inst. the following brilliant British victory was duly recorded:

"CRADOCK, 11th September.

"Nine girls, aged between 15 and 20, and one married woman, have been charged here with harboring the King's enemies and supplying them with food and other things, on the occasion of the Boer invasion of Maraisburg. Two were discharged, but the others were sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment.—REUTER."

This achievement for British law and arms could only be suitably dealt with in the language of the inimitable Dooley.

At the end of last month De la Rey was in touch with Lord Methuen's column west of Klerksdorp, one of the most "swept" districts of the Transvaal. The valiant Lichtenburger had a running fight with Methuen north to the Marico River in which the English admit their loss to be some 40 men in killed and wounded. More will probably be found in the next casualty list.

Previous to this encounter with De la Rey, Methuen's was one

of six columns engaged in a carefully planned attempt to capture the hero of Vlakfontein, General Kemp, who was again near his old haunts, at Olifant's Nek. The six columns laboriously hemmed in Kemp. He succeeded in passing by Lord Methuen in the night-time, and got away leaving some carts and wagons, and losing a few prisoners.

General Botha, who had been hovering near the Natal border, in the locality of his own home, in August fell upon a British force under Major Gough which was engaged in "sweeping" the Utrecht regions. He employed the invariable and successful Boer tactics of showing a small section of his force ahead of the enemy, so as to invite a pursuit, planting another body where they would be on the flank of the advancing Tommies. Gough was equal to the occasion, and on reaching the point where his adversary wished him to be, he was attacked in front and flank and was easily defeated; losing some 15 killed, 25 wounded, and two guns; when 150 more put up their hands.

This fight occurred the day following the date (15th of September) which was the limit in time mentioned in Kitchener's proclamation of August 7 for the outlawry of those Boer leaders who would not surrender.

Scheeper's Nek, where Botha won this victory, is some 30 miles north of Dundee (in Natal), in the Utrecht district, which adjoins the Vryheid, where Botha's home was located.

On the same date, General Smuts rushed the 17th Lancers who formed part of several columns by which he was surrounded at Elands River, near Tarkastad, due south of Stormberg, in Cape Colony. The gallant ex-Attorney-General led the dash in upon the Lancer side of the ring; he and his men shooting their way through, killing 25, and wounding 30 of their foes in the encounter.

On the 18th, the day following the mishap to the Lancers, a patrol with two guns of the noted "U" Battery were surrounded and captured a few miles south of Sannas Post; the place where De Wet won his great victory shortly after the fall of Bloemfontein. This same "U" Battery figured in General Broadwood's disaster on that occasion; these being the only guns which were saved by the retreating English force on that day.

The Boers numbered 200 in this latest "mishap," according to the English report, and the English 137 Mounted Infantry, with the battery service. The Boers had no guns, so that the advantage in fighting equipment was decidedly on the side of the British. The Boer officers who took the surrender of the Lancers were Commandants Ackerman and Coetzee.

On the 21st Commandant Kritzinger finding himself in a similar

position to that from which General Smuts snatched a victory on the 16th, repeated his exploit and rushed a body of Lovat's Scouts, in the Zastron district, on the Basutoland border. The attack was made in the dark and was characterized by great pluck on the part of the Boers, who rode into the British camp and took the enemy's fifteen-pound gun.

Counting the English casualties, as reported by the British themselves, from September 15th to the 22nd—the week immediately following Lord Kitchener's date of threatened penal consequences for those Boers who should prolong the war—the Boers seem to have responded by killing 60, wounding 133, and capturing 341 of Lord Kitchener's troops; not omitting the still more damaging blow where men with no guns captured 6 from their foemen.

COMMANDANT KRITZINGER

On the 26th of September, Commandant Groblaar attacked a British entrenched position at Fort Prospect, inside the Zululand border, which was stoutly defended by a mixed force of Durham artillery, with two guns, and Zulus. The Boers had no artillery, and were consequently at a disadvantage with the British and Zulus entrenched behind well-prepared sangars. The attack was discontinued after several hours' duration. Captain C. A. Rowley, in reporting the affair to his superior officer, said (South African Despatches, Cd. 695, p. 64): "About this time (10 A.M.) a party of Zululand Native Police gallantly led by Sergeant Gumbi, broke through and reenforced me."

General Lytleton, in forwarding Captain Rowley's report to Lord Kitchener, "recommended Sergeant Gumbi, Zululand Police, for such reward as is deemed suitable."

The assault on Fort Prospect by Commandant Groblaar was made to synchronize with a more important attack by General Christian Botha upon an entrenched English force at Itala Mount, also inside the Zululand border. The garrison at Itala consisted of some 400 troops, including the artillery service of three guns, and Colonel Chapman, of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was in command.

The attack by a portion of Botha's commando took the form of a midnight surprise, with the obvious intention of thereby avoiding the enemy's guns; the Boers having no artillery with which to cope with that of their adversaries.

The strength of the attacking force on this position and that of Fort Prospect has been greatly exaggerated in the English reports. Commandant Groblaar had no more than 150 men, while Christian Botha's commando at the time numbered less than 500. Commandant-General Louis Botha, said to have led the attack, was not within a dozen miles of the scene of action at the time. He was engaged in watching with another portion of his commando for a possible intervention by General Bruce Hamilton's division, which had followed in the wake of the Boer column since the defeat of Major Gough at Bloed River. The assault on Fort Prospect was a tactical maneuver of Botha's to confuse the enemy's larger forces moving in the locality where the simultaneous blows were planned. These forces consisted of Generals Bruce Hamilton's and Clement's columns, under the direction of General Lytleton, and the two engagements on the 26th were fought virtually within a circle formed by English troops. Louis Botha was in observation of the movements of these columns on a hill some twelve or fifteen miles away, while his brother was carrying out the attack on the fortified garrison at Itala.

The surprise at midnight was not completely successful; the enemy being well on the alert, while the position was found to be much stronger than was expected. In Colonel Chapman's report of the fight to Lord Kitchener (published by him in his despatch of the 8th of October, 1901) there is the following account of the defense which was made:

"At twelve midnight, 25th and 26th, rapid fire was heard from the advance post on the top of the Itala (held by Lieutenants Lefroy and Kane with 80 men), and continued for about fifteen minutes, when it suddenly ceased for half hour. It then recommenced and continued for half hour, when all firing from the top ceased. A verbal report was received about 2 A.M. from this post that they had been surrounded by about 500, who rushed it, and that all were either killed or taken prisoners. This was true to a great degree, but many men refused to surrender, escaped down the south side of the mountain and fought it out the whole day, doing considerable execution, from the number of dead Boers found on that side.

"The action was now general all round the camp, the fire terrific, and continued without cessation till 4 A.M.; the Boers during this phase charged close up to the trenches; many dead were picked

up two and three yards from them; at 4 A.M. the fire suddenly ceased. At dawn, 6 A.M., thinking the Boers had cleared, the native scouts were ordered out to clear up the situation, and Lieutenant Fielding, Royal Army Medical Corps, proceeded up the hill to look for wounded; suddenly the fire broke out with increased energy and continued from that time till 7.30 P.M. (19 hours). Lieutenant Fielding could not return, and was detained by the Boers. . . . The night was very bright, there being a nearly full moon, and the guns, coming into action during the first phase, and making excellent practise on the kopjes 1,100 yards north and ridge 3,400 yards north, materially helped to keep down the fire. At dawn, when the attack recommenced, they continued to fire for half hour, when they became the target for every rifle, so I ordered them to cease and the men to take cover."

Colonel Chapman's forces suffered so severely that he retreated at midnight on the 27th, leaving his wounded and dead behind, with a burying party of unarmed men.

Armed Zulus were freely employed in the defense of Itala, as at Fort Prospect. Colonel Chapman says of these auxiliaries in his report (South African Despatches, Cd. 695, p. 62):

"I sent out native scouts to reconnoiter; they reported that all Boers had cleared. . . . The native scouts, employed by me under Guide Collins, brought in early, ample, and accurate information. During my stay in Zululand, they have been constantly in the Boer laagers, and it is to their being able to so quickly transmit information that we were quite prepared when the attack began."

And it is the very officer who writes thus, who also (five lines above this grateful acknowledgment of the services of his Zulu allies), says: "The Boers shot harmless natives." Spies in Boer camps, and armed scouts fighting inside British garrisons, are "harmless natives," to shoot whom is an outrage in this highly intelligent British officer's opinion!

The British losses in the engagement amounted to over 120 men put out of action, not counting Zulus. The Boer losses were, on Kaffir authority, said to be heavy.

The battle of Fort Itala was a victory for General Christian Botha, as Colonel Chapman retired under cover of midnight, leaving his wounded behind. Chapman's charges that the Boers had stripped and robbed the dead and wounded were prompted by the chagrin of defeat, and were absolutely untrue. It is to the soldierly credit of numerous British officers and men that many of them have risen above this kind of feeling, and have frequently repaired,

in manly terms, the injury done to the character of their Boer foemen by men of narrower and meaner minds. In this instance Lieutenant Fielding, of the British Ambulance, bore this testimony:

"Nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy of General Christian Botha to the wounded. It was only his presence and influence which restrained his burghers from robbing the wounded, and on several occasions he struck burghers for trying to do so." —(Cd. 965, p. 63.)

And it is the same officer, Colonel Chapman, who penned the above calumnies against his victors, that, in the same despatch, sends on and countersigns the refutation of these unsoldierly imputations by the officer of the Army Medical Corps whose duty it was to attend to the wounded who had been left by Chapman to the care of his enemies!

Following up their victory on the 26th, the Boers under Christian Botha captured a large convoy on its way to Fort Prospect.

In the fight at Itala the English reports say the Boers had three Commandants killed, Opperman, Potgieter, and Scholz.

On the 30th of September, after these series of British mishaps had again reminded the British public of the "ended" war, the London "Globe," a paper claiming to be the organ of the ultra Imperialist Jingoes, represented Lord Roberts' successor in South Africa as having issued army orders to his troops containing the following exquisite comment upon unnecessary impedimenta to English mobility:

"The Commander-in-Chief in South Africa desires to impress upon officers in command of mobile columns that the object of such commands is mobility. He has learned that such forces have carried about with them furniture, kitchen ranges, pianos, and harmoniums, which nullify that object. He orders that these articles must be handed over at the nearest stores."

It is not always safe to accept a Continental version of British action in this war as an unbiased statement. When sympathy is markedly on the weak side there is, inevitably, a prejudiced sentiment against the stronger power in the fight. On the other hand, the English have shown themselves, in the mirror of their press, to be almost incapable (with a few very honorable exceptions) of writing fairly of their foes. Truth has, therefore, to walk cautiously when searching for facts as they occurred, instead of accepting them as represented. A Pretoria correspondent of the Vienna "Pester Lloyd" related a story the other day which is not without many an actual parallel in the records of a war waged between 35,000

farmers and 250,000 British soldiers. The statement is, that when the town of Willowmore in the south-center of Cape Colony was attacked a few weeks ago by the Boers, it was held by 400 Cape Town, or other Cape Colony, volunteers. The attacking force, 23 strong, rode into the place, attacked and killed seven of the defenders, whereupon the 393 survivors fled into the houses and there remained; refusing a challenge from the invaders to come out and fight.

General De la Rey followed Louis Botha in offering the English a stern reply to Lord Kitchener's proclamation. He had been hovering on the flanks of Methuen's march to Zeerust in the early part of September, and succeeded in inflicting some punishment upon him. Colonel Kekewich, the defender of Kimberley, was in command of a column which was engaged with Methuen's in "sweeping" operations in De la Rey's country, north of Lichtenburg. This column was 1,000 strong, including the service of three guns and a pom-pom section. They were in camp on the banks of the Selous River, between Rustenburg and Zeerust, at a place called Moedwill, on the 29th of September.

At dawn the following morning, De la Rey drove in the pickets west of the river, and rushed a number of his men up the bed of the stream passing the left of the enemy, which rested on a drift. Having lodged a body of burghers there, practically out of reach of Kekewich's guns, he attacked the other extreme of the enemy's camp from the northwest, and poured in some deadly volleys before the English artillery could be brought to play against him. Manifestly De la Rey's plan was to surprise the camp in the early morning from the bed of the river, and to rush the guns before the light would enable Kekewich to organize a proper defense, but the attack was not well timed, and the force at De la Rey's disposal was not sufficiently strong to carry his plan through. He made a furious onslaught on his foes, as usual, and put close upon 200 of them out of action; Kekewich's losses being 4 officers killed, and 23 wounded, including himself; 51 men killed, and 115 wounded. The action only continued for an hour and a half, and when the Boers drew off, not a single dead or wounded man of De la Rey's was found on the field. The English reports about "heavy Boer losses" were the usual liberal estimates of the foes they hoped they had accounted for in the fight.

In Lord Kitchener's despatch of the 8th of October he pays the following tribute to the determined character of De la Rey's attack:

"To give some idea of the severity of the fire to which the troops

were subjected it may be mentioned that three pickets were practically annihilated, and that out of a party of twelve men of the Derbyshire Regiment which was guarding a drift, eight men were killed and four wounded."

October 1-7.—The situation in Cape Colony has changed; commandoes which were said last month to be retreating north are now reported advancing south again; General Smuts being near Sheldon, Meyburg and Fouche in the Transkei, Scheepers in the south-center still, Malan in the De Aar regions, and Marais, Smit, and Theron in the extreme southwest.

The capture of a British post at Gun Hill near Ladysmith, and the appearance of Boer patrols on the Drakensbergs, along with the continuance of the Cape Colony invasion, give the public an idea of the wide extent of the Boer resistance, as the third year of the war commences.

The English are sweeping everything before them—in the Court-Martial trials. Here there are no Boer ambushes to fear. Several more rebels have been hung or shot, in the customary British manner; frequently on the evidence of Kaffirs; all with the laudable intention of inviting Dutchmen to be loyal to the authority which employs the hangman as one of the most ancient institutions of English rule.

Mr. Broeksma, a former Public Prosecutor of the Transvaal Republic, was tried in Pretoria on a charge of receiving treasonable documents from Dr. Leyds in Brussels. He was shot.

October 8-15.—English press opinion developed into a strong criticism of Lord Kitchener and his methods as a result of the three or four striking Boer victories reported during the last week in September. Significance was added to these "mishaps," coming as they did after the expiry of the date on which the English generalissimo's proclamation had fixed the outlawry of those Boer officers and officials who should still persist in fighting for their country. An uneasy feeling was also manifest at strange rumors which asserted that numbers of "missing" British Tommies had joined the Boer commandoes. The Jingo press clamored for martial law for the whole of Cape Colony. This demand was speedily responded to, and the seaport cities of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and East London are now placed, with the country districts, under military men. Two years ago to-day, October 11, 1901, Sir Alfred Milner and Mr. Chamberlain precipitated war for the alleged purpose of giving "fuller freedom," and other blessings reputed to be known to British rule, to the Boer Republics. On the second anniversary of the still prosecuted war, the English colony of the

Cape finds itself deprived of all civil liberty, and placed under the despotic rule of martial law, by Mr. Chamberlain, still Colonial Secretary, and Sir Alfred Milner, promoted to be a Lord.

A small body of Kitchener's Scouts were ambushed by a Boer force near Heilbron, Orange Free State, on the 11th. Heilbron lies within the De Wet sphere of operations.

Commandant Lotter, who was captured in September, as related, was hung at Middelburg, Cape Colony, on the 11th. He had made a gallant defense in his last stand against forces six times his strength, and was only taken after fifty per cent. of his small command were put out of action. He was, in every sense, a brave and gallant soldier on the side of freedom, and hence his execution, like a common criminal, at the hands of English law.

Commenting upon this and other court-martial crimes perpetrated under Lord Kitchener's orders, several German and Austrian papers denounced the British general as "a hangman."

The leading residents of Middelburg, Dutch and British, were ordered to attend the execution by the military authorities. This doing to death, in this shameful way, of a foeman who had so often beaten his enemies in open fight, and who had signalized himself in many an engagement as a chivalrous soldier, was one more added to the thousand disgraceful acts of the British in this war.

In the Ladysmith district, south Cape Colony, Commandant Scheepers has also been captured. He was, it appears, suffering from enteric fever and appendicitis for some time, and was taken while riding in a cart behind his men. The fate meted out to Lotter will, of course, be that of Scheepers too.

He is still under 25 years of age. With a band of other young men, which seldom exceeded 300 in number, he has inflicted numberless small "mishaps" upon the minor class of British and Colonial officers in charge of troops greatly outnumbering his commando. He has humiliated the English military caste in this way, and exhibited its patent incompetency in the field. Herein lies his chief crime. Charges of holding up and burning trains are as absurd when made against subordinate Boer officers, engaged in regular warfare, as if they were made against Botha or De la Rey. But all this will avail him nothing with the Power which executed Robert Emmet, and would have shot or hung George Washington had he been captured like Scheepers.

October 16–31.—A Boer commando 500 strong, under Marais, Smit, Theron, and Louw, has succeeded in reaching the seacoast, at Saldhana Bay, a distance of some eighty miles northwest from the capital of Cape Colony. This force approached the sea through the rich grazing country of the Berg River Valley, and it is believed

they have obtained many recruits and much supplies from the people in Hopefield district. The nearest point of railway communication with Cape Town is at Malmesbury, about equal distance between Hopefield and Cape Town.

Rumors from German sources allege that two squadrons of British Lancers have deserted into Rhodesia, and that this act is symptomatic of the discontent now prevailing among the British troops, owing to the hardships and the interminable aspect of the war.

After Botha's sharp blows at the British in Zululand, he was followed up in the usual way by the columns under General Lytleton. For the space of a week the public were led to believe he could not escape the forces in pursuit of him. He is now said to be in the mountainous region of Piet Retief, between his own country (Vryheid) and Swaziland, while the columns are somewhere else.

General De Wet has been killed again. The death, however, is not believed to be very serious, as he has recovered from at least six similar mishaps inflicted upon him by Jingo news recorders. The news of this latest killing of the great Commandant comes from Natal.

Over 500 Boers were reported killed and captured (74 killed) by the various English columns from the 21st to the 28th of this month, with 400 rifles and 8,000 cattle taken.

General Buller was relieved of his recently appointed command of the First Army Corps by the Secretary for War on the 22nd of October, for a speech delivered on the 10th inst., at a lunch given in his honor by the King's Royal Rifles. His appointment to this command had evoked very strong protests from several Jingo organs, on account of his record in the Tugela campaign against General Botha, and for his alleged message to General White advising the surrender of the Ladysmith garrison after the battle of Colenso. This criticism angered the general, and provoked him to indulge in the after-dinner effusion which has caused the War Office to remove him from the post so recently conferred upon him. The whole bungling business of the promotion and the degradation of the first British Commander-in-Chief of the war within so brief a space of time has provoked comments in the press of other countries not complimentary to the English, their military, and their cabinet ministers.

On the 28th De la Rey and Kemp defeated a column of Methuen's command under Von Donop, which was employed in burning farms and crops in the Marico River district, in the northwestern Transvaal. The British were nearing a spruit when they were assailed by a body of 300 Boers under Commandants Kemp and Oosthuizen. While the head of the British column was thus engaged, De la Rey

with the bulk of his force rode at the flank and rear of the enemy, inflicting severe punishment upon him, and carrying off a number of wagons. The fight lasted only half an hour, but the English losses amounted to 2 officers and 26 men killed, and 5 officers and 50 men wounded. The British report stated that 40 Boers were killed, including Commandant Oosthuizen.

The fight took place at Kleinfontein, the Boers retiring westward after the engagement. The reported loss of 40 killed, with no account of the number wounded, was probably a Methuen or a Kaffir exaggeration.

Canon Gore (since made Bishop of Winchester by Lord Salisbury) wrote a letter to the "Times" of the 28th inst. on the subject of infant mortality in the Concentration Camps. The following extract needs no accompanying comment:

"Hitherto the conscience of the country has been actively or passively as a whole supporting the war; but, unless I am very much mistaken, it must peremptorily require that immediate steps, however costly—whether by the speedy introduction of suitable nourishment into the camps in sufficient abundance, or by the removal of the camps to the sea—be taken to obviate this unexampled and horrible death rate among the children for whose protection we have, by a policy which may have been mistaken, but is, at any rate, not now reversible, made ourselves responsible. Otherwise I believe the honor of our country will contract a stain which we shall not be able to obliterate, and the whole Christian conscience of the country will be outraged and alienated."

The total English losses in killed, wounded, deaths from disease, "invalided home," and missing, for the month of October—the third October of the war—amounted to 98 officers and 2,471 men.

November 1-7.—The German press has violently denounced Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Edinburgh (in which he asserted that the British army in South Africa had conducted the war at least as humanely as the Germans had behaved in the Franco-German conflict) as containing "an unheard of calumny" against the German army. Indignation meetings have been called for to protest against the insult leveled at the whole Germanic Empire in comparing its soldiers with those employed by England in South Africa.

A report from Berlin asserts that 6,000 horses have been seized by Boers at a British remount station some five hours' journey by rail from Cape Town. No allusion to this "mishap" has appeared in the English press.

On this date Lord Kitchener reported a "severe attack" upon

Colonel Benson's column at Brakenlaagte, about midway between Standerton, on the Johannesburg-Natal line, and Middelburg, on the Pretoria-Delagoa Bay railway. The place lies east of a line of blockhouses running north from Greylingstadt to Balmoral. No district in the Transvaal has been so frequently "occupied," "cleared," and "swept" by British troops during the past year. The attacking force was commanded by General Louis Botha in

"UNARMED" NATIVES

"The 'King' publishes this photograph of the native scouts who led Benson's column on the night march which preceded the fight at Brakenlaagte. We reproduce it, by permission, for its additional interest as a comment on the repeated statements that during the war the natives used on our side have not been armed."—London "Morning Leader," February 8, 1902.

person and led by his brother, General Christian Botha. The English version of the fight puts the assailants of Benson at about 1,000, while pro-Boer accounts in the Continental press gave an estimate of 500.

Lord Kitchener permitted the actual facts to appear in graduated instalments. In the first report the Boers had been favored by a fog; in the next, by rain; while in a later version, derived from other sources, the burghers rode in at a spur-gallop upon and literally over the British, shooting them right and left from their saddles. The enemy's casualties were also minimized in the earlier accounts. They were put down at 214 killed and wounded. In

the final reports the actual numbers were found to be 15 officers. including Colonel Benson, killed, and 17 wounded, with a total of 86 officers and men killed, and 216 wounded; 302 casualties in all. This, however, does not include the armed Kaffir scouts who were part of Benson's force, fought with the English, and also paid for doing so in killed and wounded.

The British column, which consisted of four or five detachments with six guns, had been operating in the Bethel district of the southeastern Transvaal for some weeks in further devastating that section of the country. On the 22nd of October Benson attacked a Boer laager, and captured some 40 prisoners. On the 25th his rear-guard was in turn attacked by a force under Commandant Groblaar, who was beaten off, with results not recorded. Manifestly these attentions to Benson's column were part of a concerted scheme of attack planned by General Botha, who, on learning of the exact strength and locality of the British, rode a distance of 60 miles from the border of Zululand with 300 men under his brother's command, and united his force with Groblaar's, with the object of striking at the enemy on the first favorable opportunity. This chance came early in the morning of the 29th ult. as the British were encamped at Brakenlaagte.

Botha had disposed of his force in such a manner as to allow Benson to pass between the Boer lines and to halt for the night. The British rear-guard with two guns occupied a ridge some two miles from the enemy's main laager, and it was upon this body that Christian Botha fell with resistless force. With 300 men he rode at a gallop on the British in the most dashing manner, bearing down all resistance. Colonel Benson and other of the enemy's officers were near the guns and fought valiantly to save them, but they were all shot down, and the two fifteen-pounders were taken by the victors. After killing and wounding 300 of his foes, Botha wheeled off with his triumph and trophies and was lost to all the field-glasses of the remaining British officers when the morning sun lit up the veldt and revealed the deserted country eastward towards Ermelo and Lake Chrissie.

What lent great significance to this slashing victory of Botha's was the fact that three British columns, each as large as Benson's, under Colonel Plumer, General Walter Kitchener (brother of the Commander-in-Chief), and General Bruce Hamilton were each and all in pursuit of the Boer Commandant-General when this "mishap" occurred. The British public had been regularly informed for the last two months of Botha's "narrow escapes" from these columns; of his being "hunted," "surprised," and of "the capture of his hat and revolver" on one occasion. During this period, as

a matter of fact, he had fought Major Gough and taken three guns and over 100 men; had seen his lieutenants successfully assail Forts Prospect and Itala in Zululand; had captured two convoys of Bruce Hamilton's; fought and beat a body of troops in the Vryheid district, and surprised and overwhelmed the gallant Benson on the 29th of October, as detailed, with a force inferior to any single one of the enemy's columns, and without a single gun.

On the 31st of December the following letter relating to this victory of Botha's, and dealing with the alleged "great losses" inflicted on the burghers in the battle, appeared in the London "Daily News":

"COOKED

"Sir,—In further proof (if proof were needed) of the way 'cooked' accounts of the war are served out to the gullible British public by the War Office and Jingo press, I enclose a letter to hand this day from a relative in the South African Constabulary. The underlined portion (which you may like to quote) speaks for itself.

"I am, sir, faithfully yours,

"JOHN BURNHAM.

"Brentford.

"'We aren't far from where Colonel Benson and his staff got cut up. An account of it in the papers has reached us this mail, and it says the enemy lost heavily. I think they lost fifteen; it wasn't more than twenty at the most, and our losses were over a hundred and fifty. It was a desperate affair indeed. They keep you in the dark in England of how the war is being carried on. It's a very poor account of it indeed of that fight.'"

November 8–15.—The Privy Council of England this day dismissed the appeal addressed to it by a Cape Colonist against arrest and imprisonment under martial law, which were held to be justifiable by the Colonial courts. Mr. Frederic Harrison (in an address delivered in Newton Hall, London, a few days subsequently) dealt with this decision of the Privy Council as follows:

"No more outrageous prostitution of justice, no more insolent defiance of accepted and recognized law, had occurred in English courts since the time of Jeffreys and Scroggs, and the other apostate creatures of Stuart tyranny, than were to be found in the dicta of the Lord Chancellor of England. Mr. Marais, a British subject, living at Paarl, in Cape Colony, was arrested, with others, thirty miles or so from Cape Town, in a district where no war or insurrection existed, was carried to Beaufort West, 300 miles away, and had been kept in gaol ever since without trial or formal charge. He appealed from the Supreme Court at Cape Town to the Privy

Council here, which declined even to hear his case or ask why he was imprisoned; and he (Mr. Harrison) presumed that if the soldiers were to shoot or torture Mr. Marais, the Privy Council, by their decision, would say that it was no affair of theirs, and that they would not even inquire what had been done."—"Daily News," November 11, 1901.

One more evil act and precedent added to the thousand and one evil actions already put down to England's account through this calamitous war.

Miss Emily Hobhouse, niece of Lord Hobhouse, who visited several of the concentration camps in South Africa in the early part of this year, and published her impressions in England, was yesterday prevented from landing in Cape Town. She was ultimately removed, by force, to another ship, and compelled to return to England. This is a decided victory for Lord Milner.

De Wet appears again in the northeastern region of the Orange Free State with a number of followers. This is the first movement of the Free State Commandant-General since his latest death at the hands of Reuter.

A British convoy on the way from Lambert's Bay to Clanwilliam (Cape Colony) has been ambushed and captured, by Commandant Maritz, at Bevendam.

November 16–23.—De Wet with some 400 men attacked the rear-guard of Colonel Byng's column while carrying off stock near Heilbron (O. F. S.). The fight continued for two hours, after which the Boers drew off. Twelve English casualties.

On the 16th of November, the British press published a despatch from Reuter of a letter from Middelburg, Cape Colony, dated October 25, which contained this account of some British Colonial fighting:

"On the 13th inst. about 200 men of Smuts' commando, under Van der Venter, Karsten, and Botha, attacked a post at Doornbosch, near Somerset East, held by about 50 men of the Somerset District Mounted Troops. Captain Thornton, of the Cape Police, with 130 men of the same District Mounted Troops, went to the relief of the place, but were unable to prevent its surrender after a very feeble resistance. In his report Captain Thornton states that he took up a fairly strong position and was confident of holding his own, but the men under him having fired off most of their ammunition when the enemy was over 2,000 yards away, refused to fight on the nearer approach of the Boers, saying they would be shot if they did, and incontinently surrendered, only one man being slightly wounded.

"Thus, 180 men with rifles and 190 horses fell into the hands

of the enemy. From the above account it will be seen at once that the surrender must have been intentional, for it is inconceivable that 180 men would surrender a strong position to an equal force with practically no resistance unless by prearrangement."

November 24–30.—A report of the "capture of Boer Commandant" by Colonel Rimington a few days ago turns out to have omitted a slight matter of fact relating to the capture, at the same time, of 100 British by Commandant Groblaar. The affair occurred near Villiersdorp. Groblaar, of General Botha's force, was retiring before Rimington's column when he encountered Major Fisher and 100 men whom he took with him, after some fighting. Commandant Buys was wounded and left behind, and so fell into Rimington's hands. The English were subsequently released. Major Fisher was dangerously wounded in the encounter.

Commandant Joubert, of George Brand's commando, was wounded and captured in a fight in the southeast of the Free State with a section of General Knox's forces. Some forty more Boers were also taken on the same occasion.

The British losses during the month of November, according to the War Office report, were: Officers killed, 24; men, 193; died of disease, 236 (officers and men); accidental deaths, 45; missing and prisoners, 77; wounded, 435; sent home as invalids, 3,242. Total of the enemy put out of action for the month, 4,252.

December 1–7.—Particulars of General De Wet's recent attack upon a column under Colonel Wilson, near Heilbron, and of how Colonel Rimington rescued Wilson and "outwitted" the Boer general, show that the British had a narrow escape from a serious mishap. Wilson left Heilbron with his column (strength not given), and found himself attacked when clear of the town. He was pursued in a running fight for three days, the distance covered by his force being only fourteen miles in that time. He was finally compelled to stand when finding Boers in front as well as behind him. He heliographed to Colonel Rimington, who was north of the Vaal River, for help, and that officer started at once to his rescue. He covered over thirty miles in his rescue ride, and succeeded in joining his men to Wilson's. It was found necessary, however, to turn the united column back to Heilbron, and to fight all the way for the protection of the convoy with Wilson's force, which appears to have been the main object of De Wet's attentions. Rimington had to abandon two of his wagons to the Boer forces, but succeeded, by the ruse of lighting misleading fires during the night, in escaping from his pursuers. No information is given of the losses in killed or wounded on either side.

December 8–15.—A body of Colonial Constabulary raided the village of Bothaville and carried off a dozen prisoners. They were pursued, the prisoners rescued, and the constabulary driven back across the Valsch River. Bothaville is in the northwest of the Free State, on the Transvaal border, where De Wet suffered a severe "mishap" in November, 1900.

General Bruce Hamilton reports an attack upon and the capture of another Boer laager in the Ermelo district, at a place called Witkraans. Sixteen Boers were killed and seventy armed prisoners were taken; among them being Field Cornet Badenhorst of Boxburg; a noted officer who fought with General Botha during the Tugela campaign. One of the guns captured by the Boers at Brakenlaagte was retaken in this surprise of Piet Viljoen's force.

Another report, from Zululand, says that General Louis Botha was severely wounded in an engagement at Luneberg, being shot through the left leg below the knee, and narrowly escaped capture by crawling into the bush. Eighty Boer prisoners are said to have been taken on the same occasion.

December 16–23.—Commandant Kritzinger in attempting with a force of 150 men to cross the De Aar-Naauwpoort railway, between Hanover and Taaibosch (Cape Colony), was fired upon from a blockhouse. The Commandant and his men retired, five being wounded. Kritzinger returned under fire again to carry off one of his wounded men, when he was hit and so severely wounded that he was taken prisoner, together with his five wounded companions.

Kritzinger is a citizen of the Orange Free State aged about twenty-seven. He has been the most successful of the numerous Commandants who invaded the Cape Colony in retaliation for the farm-burning, and looting measures resorted to by the British after the enemy's occupation of Pretoria. More detailed references are made to him in previous entries in this diary.

The trial of Commandant Scheepers for "murder," etc., commenced at Graaff Reinet, Cape Colony, on the 18th of December. There were thirty charges made against him. One charge, "that he had made war on the enemies of the Boer Republics" would include all the others. According to reports sent to the German press his trial was forced on while he was suffering severe illness. This indecent haste to gratify the revengeful feeling of the Cape loyalists is worthy of those whose volunteers he had so frequently whipped in the field.

Recent meetings between Botha, De Wet, and other Boer generals, believed to have taken place in the southeast of the Transvaal for the purpose of discussing "terms of surrender," are now

reported to have been convened for the consideration of a renewed plan of campaign.

Major McMicking, while marching with 100 men near Vredefort, Orange Free State, was attacked by a Boer force, and driven back over the railway. He escaped under cover of the night.

President Steyn, writing to a friend in Germany, speaks of the struggle and of his hopes in the same undaunted spirit with which he has carried on the conflict for independence since Mr. Kruger's departure from South Africa:

"The situation is uncommonly favorable to the Boers. The certainty reigns everywhere that the war can never end successfully for the British. Neither he nor other commanders think of giving up even an inch of territory, much less their full independence. It was to be expected that the war, even if it came to an end for the present, would be carried on for generations, for in the Transvaal there was gold under every stone, and the English would never rest till they had got possession of it all. He is ready to fight to the end, but not, as was believed a year ago, to the bitter end, but to a happy one."

Commandant Cherrie Emmet, brother-in-law of Commandant General Botha, has been for some time past in charge of a section of the old Vryheid commando which figured so conspicuously in General Lukas Meyer's forces during the early months of the war. Commandant Emmet is about 30 years old, tall and athletically built. It was he and Commandant Pohlman of the Johannesburg Police who brought in the ten Armstrong guns which were taken at Colenso.

On Dingaan's Day (December 16) President Steyn, General De Wet, and the Boer forces in the northeast of the Free State, assembled at Kaffir Kop, near Lindley. Patriotic speeches were made and all counsels of surrender to the enemy were denounced and repudiated. This region has been overrun by British sweeping columns at least a dozen times, and is at present more or less "enclosed" by lines of blockhouses.

Commandant Haasbroek was killed in an engagement on the 16th of December, as he was leading a company of 40 men in an attack upon a column of the enemy under Major Marshall, near Senekal, Orange Free State. The Commandant had left the main body of the Boers under Celliers and Latigan, some three miles behind, and was intent upon making a diverting attack on a section of Marshall's force to cover a surprise assault by Celliers on the English column. He was killed by a bullet in the head. On learning of the death of their leader his commando retreated. Haasbroek was one of De Wet's most capable lieutenants.

In the eastern Transvaal, near Berginderlyn, 200 British, engaged in searching and wrecking farms, were surprised and overwhelmed by a force of 300 Ermelo burghers under Commandant Britz. The report says "the casualties were severe." The Boers are credited with having charged with determination. Subsequent accounts of this action say that 3 officers and 5 men were killed, with 2 officers and 30 men wounded. A "number" of Major Bridgeford's companies were reported captured.

Colonel Park was attacked at Elandspruit (north Transvaal) by a small body of patroling Boers under Commandant Muller having a pom-pom. They were driven off after several hours of fighting, leaving 8 killed and 3 wounded. Park's loss was admitted to be 7 killed, and 6 officers and 18 other men wounded.

According to a letter from Kimberley in the "Standard" of this date, Kuruman, in Bechuanaland, was attacked and looted by a Boer force a few weeks ago. No allusion to or account of this "mishap" has been made in any of Lord Kitchener's daily or weekly reports to the British War Office.

After celebrating Dingaan's Day at Kaffir Kop in company with President Steyn, General De Wet appears to have moved southeastward and crossed the road leading from Harrismith to Bethlehem. A line of blockhouses was being constructed along this road by the English, and two or three of the enemy's columns were operating in the district.

On the 18th, one of these columns, under the command of Colonel Dartnell, ran up against De Wet's force, south of the Bethlehem road, some thirty or forty miles west of Harrismith, in a hilly region. Particulars of the encounter were not published, but as it was acknowledged in the British press that Dartnell and his Light Horse "retired towards the Elands River," it may be reasonably assumed that the English were forced to retreat in the direction of their base.

December 24–31.—Three successive and apparently successful attacks by Boer forces are reported on the 24th. Colonel Damant, operating with Colonel Rimington, was surprised by a force of 800 Boers at Tafelkop, about midway between Vrede and Frankfort, in the northeast of the Free State. The Boers were led by M. Botha (probably a son of the late General Philip Botha, whose home was in the Vrede district) and rushed a kopje on which the English column had taken position. The British were overwhelmed and lost a gun. Damant went to the rescue of the position with a single company, almost every one of whom was wounded, including the officer in command. This bravery enabled other British forces to operate on the flank of the attacking Boers, while Colonel Rim-

ington's arrival with another column caused Botha and his men to retire, but with two captured guns. The English casualties were given as 22 killed, and the same number wounded. Another British column, composed mainly of Yeomen, about 500 strong, under Colonel Firman, was encamped on Christmas Eve on a kopje at Tweefontein, guarding the Bethlehem end of the blockhouse line. This kopje was an isolated hill, the southern side being very steep, with the northern side sloping gradually to the level of the veldt. The Yeomen were in charge of considerable stores for the blockhouses, and had a gun and a pom-pom.

Manifestly De Wet required these stores for Christmas. He appears to have remained in the region south of the Bethlehem-Harrismith road, in among the spurs of the Roodebergen hills, since his brush with Dartnell, waiting for his quarry. He selected Christmas Eve for his swoop, and at two in the morning of the 24th his men, in bare feet, scaled the precipitous southern side of the hill, dashed in upon the sleeping camp, and overwhelmed the Yeomen. On climbing to the top of the kopje they had rushed the pickets, wrenched the rifles from their hands, and then swept resistlessly through the laager bayoneting many of their enemies with the weapons they had seized on gaining the summit of the hill.

The English were under the command of Major Williams of the South Staffordshire regiment, in the temporary absence of Colonel Firman. Williams was killed, along with six other officers, in attempting to rally their men to meet the Boer surprise attack. Eight other officers were wounded in the fight. The total English casualties amounted to 63 killed, 55 wounded, and 246 surrenders. De Wet virtually captured the whole camp, its defenders, and stores; including the gun, pom-pom, and ammunition; and having, in this characteristic manner, despatched a "mishap"-Christmas greeting to England, moved off with his force, "pursued" as usual by the columns, new and old, by which he has been followed during the last eighteen months.

So ended the year 1901 with the great general of the Free State still signalizing himself as ever in a brilliant display of the finest fighting qualities.

Chapter XXXIX

DIARY OF THE WAR—JANUARY TO MARCH, 1902

VICTORIES OF DE WET, BOTHA, AND HERTZOG—DEPRESSING EFFECT ON BRITISH ARMY—MARTIAL LAW STILL MORE HARSHLY ENFORCED IN CAPE COLONY—KITCHENER CABLES FOR CANADIAN SCOUTS—ORGANIZATION OF BOER TRAITORS INTO "NATIONAL SCOUTS"—REUTER CANARD OF BOER TREACHERY EXPLODED—THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR ON CHAMBERLAIN'S INSULT TO GERMAN ARMY—"HE IS BITING ON GRANITE"—WOLMARANS CAPTURED—SCHALK BURGER WRITES KITCHENER, DENOUNCING CRUELTY OF CONCENTRATION POLICY—APPALLING LIST OF DEATHS OF CHILDREN—BRUTAL EXECUTION OF SCHEEPERS—CAPTURE OF VILJOEN—UNAUTHORIZED INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF BOERS BY PRIME MINISTER OF HOLLAND—LETTER OF SMUTS TO BOTHA—KITCHENER PLANS "DRIVE" TO CAPTURE DE WET AND STEYN—HIS "WATERHAUL"—BOER OPERATIONS IN THE ZUIKERBOSHRAND—DE LA REY'S VICTORY AT YSTER SPRUIT—KITCHENER "AVENGES MAJUBA DAY" BY HUGE CAPTURES OF SHEEP AND CATTLE—TWO EXAMPLES OF KITCHENER'S "KAFFIR ESTIMATES"—VILONEL, THE BENEDICT ARNOLD OF SOUTH AFRICA—AUSTRALIAN PETITION FOR RECALL OF "KANGAROO" VOLUNTEERS—DE LA REY DEFEATS AND CAPTURES LORD METHUEN—HE RELEASES THE WOUNDED GENERAL—MISTAKEN GENEROSITY OF THE ACT—HOW IT WAS RETURNED—BRITISH CHARGE BOERS WITH TREACHERY BECAUSE DRESSED IN CAPTURED KHAKI—DEATH OF CECIL RHODES.

January 1.—The New Year begins with news that fighting occurred at Laing's Nek and Warmbaths in the Transvaal; Botha's Pass, Heilbron, Bethulie, and Philippolis in the Free State, and in the Calvinia, Wellwood, and the Middelburg districts of Cape Colony, in the closing days of the old year. De Wet was located on some hills south of Heilbron, shortly after his dashing exploit on Christmas Eve.

At Philippolis (south of the Free State, near the Orange River), Hertzog's commando attacked a force of 400 British, captured their wagons, and helped themselves to the Christmas cheer which these contained.

Some recent despatches from Pretoria speak of the depressing effect produced there by the latest successes of De Wet and Botha, and give expression to the feeling that still more reenforcements must be sent to Lord Kitchener if there is to be a speedy termination to the war.

The doings of the martial-law administrators in Cape Colony, as revealed in letters which have arrived by mail in Germany and

England, read like a chapter from the history of British Government in Ireland, in 1798. Three "rebels" were shot at De Aar, four more were hung at Burghersdorp, Middelburg, and Cradock: the friends of the victims and the general public, in each place, being compelled to attend the executions! Several more "rebels" have, it appears, been shot in other places, while a young man named Hoffmeyer Louw, of exemplary character and of strong religious feeling, was publicly hung at Colesberg for having been on commando. To maintain the orthodox British reputation for legal brutality, seven girls, all under the age of twenty, were tried and sent to prison for a month, for the crime of having sung the Boer National Anthem in the hearing of some English officials. Manifestly the making of another Ireland in Cape Colony is in full swing, as an additional result of the war against the Boer Republics.

Lists of casualties published in the press reveal the fact that fighting took place recently in many places not otherwise mentioned in the ordinary war news from Pretoria. It appears also that the total casualties in the fight with De Wet on the 24th of December amounted to 400, while it is believed he took a big haul of ammunition along with the two captured guns.

On the 30th of last month a fight took place in the Calvinia district, West Cape Colony, in which the 2nd Dragoon Guards had some twenty casualties. The Boers were probably Louw's men.

On the 3rd inst. General Bruce Hamilton captured 100 prisoners, including General Erasmus and a considerable amount of stock in the Ermelo district. It is not made clear whether this Boer officer is Commandant D. Erasmus, who had charge of the Pretoria and other commandoes and failed to cooperate with Lukas Meyer in the attack upon General Penn Symons, in the battle of Talana Hill. It may possibly be Jacob Erasmus, who has been reported captured once or twice before. In either case the loss to the Boer fighters still in the field will not be particularly discouraging.

A detachment of Scots Greys sent to surprise a small Boer force near Bronkhurstspruit (40 miles east of Pretoria) were themselves surprised, on meeting with a vigorous reception which cost them twenty casualties; seven being killed. The district east to Middelburg is under the care of men of Trichardt's small commando, who were probably those who encountered the Scotchmen.

Lord Kitchener has cabled to Mr. Chamberlain suggesting the despatch to South Africa of some Canadian scouts as "trained trackers." Canada responds by promising the required help.

The body called "National Scouts," said to have been organized out of burghers who are sick of the war, and of the Boer leaders,

has invited the by-name of "National Skunks" from their kindred still in the field.

Lord Milner presided at the resurrection of the Johannesburg "Star," which played so notorious a part in the Ananias propaganda preceding the war. No more suitable person could have graced such an occasion. The Ten Commandments were probably not referred to by the Chairman or company during the ceremony.

Casualty lists continue to appear which speak of encounters not mentioned in Lord Kitchener's weekly reports. The losses are probably considered too small to call for notice otherwise. They tell, all the same, of the dogged resistance of the Boers everywhere there are half-a-dozen of them left to fight, and they speak of the continued penalty which the aggressor in this unparalleled war has to pay in lives, as well as in money, for the attempt to destroy a little nation.

Another calumny against the Boers by the veracious Reuter has been mailed. It was published as follows, on the 2nd inst.:

"PRETORIA, Wednesday.

"News recently reached Warmbaths that six Boers in the vicinity were desirous of surrendering.

"Two Intelligence Officers named Steere and Kerr went to ascertain particulars, a few men following as a precaution. Steere and Kerr, riding in advance, came on some Boers, and began parleying with them, when fire was opened by other Boers, who were concealed.

"Both officers were shot dead.—REUTER SPECIAL."

The War Office has published the following notice:

"Lord Kitchener has replied to a telegram of inquiry that the report recently circulated that two Intelligence Officers, named Steere and Kerr, had been treacherously shot by the Boers near Warmbaths is without foundation."

Early in the week General Christian Botha and Commandant Opperman (the latter having been "killed," for the second time at the battle of Mount Itala) were engaged with one of the "sweeping" columns, under General Spens, in the southeastern Transvaal. The Boer officers appear to have enticed some of the enemy to engage in a chase of retreating foemen, with the result that 18 of those who accepted the invitation were killed, including 5 officers, while 28 were wounded. The engagement came off near Standerton, inside a blockhouse and fenced district, "swept" of Boers full twenty times during the past two years.

Several laagers are reported about the same time as being surprised and captured by the British. Little or no fighting is

recorded in Cape Colony, while General De Wet is still pursued by General Elliot's, and other columns, in his own country. He is said to have received reenforcements recently from General Louis Botha.

January 8–15.—The German Imperial Chancellor, replying in the Reichstag to Mr. Chamberlain's Edinburgh speech, in which the British army in South Africa had been compared to the German army in France in words flattering to the khaki soldiers, said:

"The German army, however, stands too high, and its shield is too bright to be touched by any unjust judgment, and the words apply which Frederick the Great used of a man who had spoken ill of his army, 'Let the man be, and don't excite yourselves. He is biting on granite.'"

On the 13th and 14th a fight took place at Doornfontein, near Griquatown, about 100 miles west of Kimberley. The British report 24 casualties; the officer of the detachment, Major Whitehead, with several of his men, being killed. The name of the Boer officer who attacked the enemy is not given. It is probably Conroy or De Villiers.

The British have recovered one of the guns taken from Colonel Benson in the battle of Brakenlaagte.

General Botha is located on the Zulu border, convenient to Natal, and is believed to be concerting with De Wet a plan of operations for the New Year.

General Bruce Hamilton's column surprised a laager near Ermelo, and took 40 prisoners, including Major Wolmarans of the Transvaal Staats Artillery. Wolmarans was one of the founders of that splendid body; having been sent to Europe when young by General Joubert to study the German artillery system after the Franco-German war. He took part in the siege of Ladysmith, was court-martialed and suspended for a brief period on account of the successful night attack made on a "Long Tom" which was under his charge at the time. He subsequently served with Botha during part of the Tugela campaign, and was in charge of his Krupps at the battle of Spion Kop.

De Wet has had a fight with General Elliot's column at a drift near Elands Kop (Lindley district). He had two guns and a pom-pom, and succeeded in holding the English back with his artillery until his men and baggage got safely away.

In the latest Blue Book dealing with the war, a letter from acting-President Schalk Burger to Lord Kitchener, in reply to the latter's proclamation of the 7th of August last, is printed. The concluding paragraph reads:

"While I am writing about this, I cannot help pointing out to your Excellency the improper way in which those poor families were removed, in rain and cold, on uncovered wagons, insulted by Kaffirs and soldiers, and taken with your Excellency's columns as a protection to your troops, in this way preventing an attack from our side. I feel convinced that if the atrocities and the inhuman treatment of our families are brought before the noble and Christian portion of the English people in their true light, they would exclaim, 'Away with such shame.' But the truth is being concealed; but still we believe and trust that altho there may be no justice with England's influential (great) men, there is a just God, and truth and right must be victorious."

A body of Boers under Commandants Kemp and Celliers, of De la Rey's commando, crossed the Mafeking line, and brought back large quantities of cattle. They were opposed by British posts south and west of the scene of General Baden-Powell's fame, but fought their way back with their seizures.

January 16–23.—The latest returns of the mortality in the concentration camps show that the English are killing their imprisoned foes—women, children, and non-combatants—more quickly than they are disposing of the Boers in the field. In the seven months from June to December, 1901, no less than 16,321 persons died under the British Weyler treatment. This appalling rate amounts to close on one in four per annum of the total population of the camps! Twelve thousand two hundred and sixty-five children are included in this six months' British "bag"; children whose crime consists in being born Boer. And a morally rotten "Christian" world reads these figures in its papers, says, "How shocking!" and turns to the latest Stock Exchange quotations of the Rand mines.

Dr. Visser, of Johannesburg, who rendered splendid ambulance service to the Boer armies early in the war, has been tried for treason and on other charges before a military tribunal.

The following despatch appeared in the press on the 20th:

"GRAAFF REINET, January 17.

"Commandant Scheepers was brought into the Church Square here to-day, and Colonel Henniker read the sentence of death which was passed by the Court and confirmed by Lord Kitchener. The trial of Commandant Kritzinger will commence next week.

"January 18.

"Commandant Scheepers was shot here at three o'clock this afternoon.—REUTER."

This doing to death of a brave young soldier can add no disgrace to a war which has already covered England with every kind

of dishonor. It only sustains the reputation of British arms in a war engineered by lies for the purpose of plunder.

Commandant Scheepers was tried before a court of three officers of minor rank; men of the stamp he had so often and so easily thrashed in the field. He was charged with "arson" and with "murdering natives." The arson consisted in burning the Government buildings at Murraysburg, Cape Colony, together with two houses of Boer adherents who had gone over to the British. He had, however, given no less than eight days' notice to garrison the place before he entered it. He spared the magistrate's house, saying to his son: "I have not the heart to turn your mother into the street, tho if I did my conduct would be less cruel than that of your British officers, who have burned down our homes in the darkness, and left our mothers and sisters to shiver in their night-dresses by the side of the sheep kraal." It was officers who had themselves, in all probability, burned some of the thousands of homes destroyed in the Transvaal and Free State who made this act of retaliation against a Government building "a crime."

The charge of shooting natives was even more hypocritical in its shameless effrontery. These natives had been armed and employed as spies and scouts by the English. They had been warned by Kritzinger and Scheepers, when Cape Colony was invaded, that they would be severely dealt with if they took up arms against the Republics, but would not be molested if they remained neutral. On the other hand, British Ministers in Parliament had declared, on the eve of the war, that no native people would be brought into the struggle by England. English officers, nevertheless, armed Kaffirs and employed them in that kind of work which is most dangerous and obnoxious to an enemy—spy work and scouting; and when these were caught in arms, and so engaged, they were rightly shot by the Boer Commandants. To an official at Murraysburg who denied that the natives in that locality had been so employed, Scheepers replied: "You deny using natives against us! Why, I have shot them at 200 yards, and in the front line of fire, where your own men shrank from going. At that range I once gave the order to knock over some thirteen colored scouts when your column was advancing to the attack some 600 yards behind." The incident here recorded surely offers sufficient explanation of why a court of British officers should condemn such a foeman to death.

The facts thus related are taken from a manly Christian protest of an English clergyman, the Rev. Dewdney Wm. Drew, on the 22nd of January, which was sent in an uncensored letter from Cape Town to the "Daily News" of London, and published in that journal on the 12th of February of this year.

Several other Englishmen have borne testimony to Scheepers' kindness towards captured British troops. He had spared many a life which had been forfeit in the rules of war, and was always found to be generous and humane to the enemies who fell into his hands. But these are qualities which shame the kind of English officer described by Scheepers as fighting from behind armed savages, and hence the verdict which has just been carried into execution.

Misled by press reports into the belief that Scheepers, tho condemned to death, was not yet executed, Senator Teller gave notice he would move in the United States Senate a resolution which had already been adopted in the House of Representatives. It read as follows:

"Scheepers is known to have been captured while sick and wounded in hospital, in violation of the Geneva Convention. His execution will lead to acts of retaliation and reprisal, and it is therefore resolved, the House of Representatives concurring, that the President should request Great Britain to set aside the sentence in the interest of humanity, and to accord Scheepers the privileges and immunities guaranteed by the Geneva Convention."

Commandant Wessels, at the head of 200 invaders in the Craddock district of Cape Colony, captured 50 of the Town Guard who went out to find the Boers and did not return.

Colonel Wilson, with a column of 400 men and a gun, came in contact with a body of Boers north of Frankfort (north Free State) on the 25th, and fared badly. The English were mainly composed of the Cape Town volunteers, "Kitchener's Fighting Scouts," while the Boers, in about equal numbers, were under Commandants Alberts and Strydum. Strydum had been ambushed the day before, along with 40 of his men, and the British with their captives were attacked by Alberts and Meyer on the way back to Frankfort. Strydum and his men were released by the rescuing party, who then, in a running fight, pursued the British a distance of a dozen miles to the shelter of a larger British force.

General Ben Viljoen has been captured with two of his adjutants near Lydenburg under circumstances which would suggest treachery of some kind. It appears the English were informed of a visit which the general was paying to a farm distant some miles from his laager, and in the vicinity of the enemy's lines. A party of British lay in ambush for him on his return, and fired point blank upon the surprised officer and his men. A bullet went through his coat, and one of his adjutants was shot dead. His capture is hailed by the British press as a severe blow to the Boer army. This is

true, but not to the extent its enemy believes. Viljoen has been a dashing leader all along, but more of an impetuous, dare-devil soldier than of a commander of the type of Botha or De la Rey. His recklessness at Elandslaagte, born of too great a contempt for the English soldier, had something to do with the defeat of General Kock's ill-fated commando. Everything that true courage could do in one man was attempted by Viljoen to retrieve the fortunes of that disastrous day; but the battle was lost by want of judgment in Kock and in himself, and not for pluck to fight a combat so unequal as that between 800 men and two guns, against 4,000 British and three batteries of artillery. He was wounded in the engagement, but was in the field again at Modderspruit a few days afterward. He took part in the ill-judged siege of Ladysmith until Louis Botha succeeded Joubert, when the fiery Ben took his Rand veterans with him to the Tugela. His defense of Vaal Krantz with a force of seventy or eighty men and a Maxim-Nordenfelt, against a force twenty times his strength in men and guns, and his heroic rescue of his gun after holding the hill for most of a day, will rank as one of the bravest stands made on any battlefield in the records of war. He fought under Louis Botha in the retreat from Pretoria eastward, and was appointed to the command of the Lydenburg and northeastern districts of the Transvaal, after the Boers abandoned the defense of the Delagoa Bay railway. He attacked and took Belfast from the British as mentioned in this diary; his young son, a lad of 15, being killed by his side on that occasion. He it was who also captured the Victoria (Australian) Volunteers at Wilmansrust, when the prowess of these Kangaroo Imperialists did not excite the admiration of General Bateson. He showed great resource as an officer in his operations during 1901 against the various columns and forces with which he had to contend in the mountainous regions committed to his care. After the many able Commandants who have been killed or captured during the past year, it will be no easy task to find a competent successor for his commando. He will probably be succeeded by his brother Piet Viljoen.

I met General Viljoen in Pretoria on the occasion of the last meeting of the Volksraad. He presented me with the picture of himself which appears in this volume. He is a handsome, athletic-built man in the very prime of life; aged about 40, standing 5 feet 10 inches in height, with a German cast of features, blue eyes, and lightish hair and mustache.

His reply to Lord Kitchener's series of proclamations in September last contained the following sarcastic references to the British army:

"We are accused of murdering Kaffirs; but when Kaffirs are found by us as bands of robbers and murderers we treated them according to law and justice, and did not take Kaffirs prisoners without cause. Considering, however, that according to the information sent us by Lord Kitchener, these bands of robbers must be English soldiers, we shall, in future, treat them as such.

"Further, it is said that we continue the war without being sufficiently provided with arms and supplies; every Boer, however, knows that we are amply provided with arms, ammunition, and supplies—by the English Government."

Commandant Beyers attacked the British camp in Pietersburg (north Transvaal) on the 25th, and carried off a number of the imprisoned Boers.

The English report the capture of several more laagers in the Transvaal and Free State.

Efforts to bring about peace have been made by the Prime Minister of Holland. He has visited London, and subsequently addressed a note to the British Government, offering the services of his Ministry to bring about a cessation of hostilities, with a view to such a settlement of the war as might be mutually satisfactory. Dr. Kuyper has apparently acted in this manner not alone without the authority, but, it is said, without the knowledge, of the Boer leaders in Europe.

Lord Kitchener reports further successes of General Bruce Hamilton in the Ermelo districts, and of other "sweeping" columns in the western Transvaal and Free State; General French claiming that the Boer forces in Cape Colony are dwindling in number, and no longer demanding very serious attention.

A few days ago, a British colonel and seven of his men were killed in a fight with Nieuhoudt's force in the southwest of the Free State, near the Riet River.

February 1-8.—Mr. Fischer, the head of the Free State section of the Boer leaders in Europe, in an interview with a Paris paper, expresses himself as follows on the execution of Commandant Scheepers:

"Mr. Fischer describes the shooting of Scheepers as a miserable assassination, and his trial as a sinister comedy. 'I knew Scheepers, and can tell you I would be less unlikely to be an assassin myself than Scheepers—the gentlest of men.' 'Why do not the Boers resort to reprisals?' 'That is not in their nature. A Boer will never kill in cold blood a disarmed enemy. Besides, the execution of men like Lotter, Louw, and Scheepers injures the English more than the most rigorous reprisals could do.'"

Two correlated pieces of news come from Johannesburg on this 1st day of February.

The first is that Mrs. De Wet, wife of the general, is now detained in a concentration camp in Natal, with her youngest children. This act is so characteristic of English ideas of chivalry that it requires no comment. It is possibly due to the action of Lord Milner rather than to that of Lord Kitchener.

The other item relates that twenty-three British columns are now engaged in the task of capturing her husband. The number twenty-three may be the complement of all the various columns and divisions which have been heretofore fruitlessly employed in the same task, and are now to be combined in one overwhelming final effort. Rumor says that it is the British Commander-in-Chief's resolve to have De Wet as a prisoner, if alive, for the occasion of King Edward's coronation, in June. President Steyn is reported to be with his Chief Commandant, and both are believed to be well within the circle of blockhouses, fences, and living columns now being drawn round the coveted prize of the two most formidable foes of the British still in the field.

Lord Lansdowne has returned a courteously-worded reply to Dr. Kuyper's offer on the part of the Dutch Ministry to cooperate in efforts to bring about peace. The British Foreign Secretary says, in substance: His Majesty's Government will receive and consider any proposals made by Boer leaders in the field to Lord Kitchener, but will not recognize the status of Boer representatives in Europe.

A letter of General Tobias Smuts to Commandant-General Botha, written last September, and found by the British in a surprised laager, has been published by Mr. Chamberlain. It is a manly, dignified, and patriotic letter which will do the Boer cause no disservice. It appears that General Smuts has been deprived of his rank by Louis Botha for having burned Bremersdorp, in Swaziland, after capturing the town from a mixed force of British and Swazi troops. This proceeding displeased the Commandant-General, as "being opposed to Boer principles," and he marked his condemnation of the act by the severe punishment of degradation. No friend of the Boer cause can read General Smuts' letter without feeling that a great wrong has been done to a brave officer and a most loyal burgher for doing that once which the British have systematically done as a necessary war measure. Doubtless Louis Botha felt that English examples of barbarism were the worst of crimes in Boer officers, and had to be stopped by stern penalties. But, while this speaks volumes for the humanity of the Boers, the punishment by which the lesson was enforced was, under all the circumstances, unjust and excessive.

I had the pleasure of enjoying General Smuts' hospitality in his camp at Brandfort with General De la Rey, in April, 1900. He was then in charge of the Ermelo and Carolina commando; having been the representative of the former district in the Volksraad before and during the war. He is a man of medium height, with dark hair and beard, of gentlemanly appearance, and aged about forty. He speaks English like a man of education, and would suggest, in his general conversation, a jovial man of the world who hated war and the killing of men as thoroughly as if he were a member of the Society of Friends. He was a Progressive in the Volksraad, and opposed to the Kruger Party, as were De la Rey and Louis Botha; but when England forced the Transvaal to defend its life he was, tho a very wealthy burgher, one of the first men in the field. He has fought right through the war, and has taken part in most of the battles in which Louis Botha commanded. He it was who took the second batch of reenforcements up the steep side of Spion Kop, and helped to win that splendid victory for Boer pluck. Part of the story of that memorable fight which I have given in a previous chapter was taken down from General Smuts' dictation in his tent at Brandfort. It is in keeping with his manly nature to conclude his letter of protest to his superior and friend by saying: "I wish to give you the assurance that I have never lost sight of the interest and the success of our cause. I always served this cause in all sincerity, and I hope to do so in future, also, as a private burgher."

On the 4th inst. a defeat of a portion of De Wet's commando is said to have taken place in the Reitz region of the Free State. Commandant Mears with a force said to be 300 strong and two of the guns captured by De Wet on Christmas Eve were surprised early in the morning and routed; the guns being retaken by the English forces.

On the same date Lord Kitchener reports the defeat and capture of 130 men of De la Rey's commando and the capture of their leader, Commandant Sarel Alberts, by Colonel Kekewich's column, in the Western Transvaal.

February 8–15.—The twenty-three columns engaged in what was to be the morally certain capture of De Wet have failed in their attempt. A great cordon was drawn round him, after months of preparations, and so sure was Lord Kitchener of the success of his latest plan and attempt that he proceeded from Pretoria to Wolvehoek in the expectation of being in at the death or capture of the quarry. He has returned to headquarters without his prisoner.

The lines inside of which De Wet and his men were penned, like so many wild beasts offering sport to hunters, were in the form of

a triangle, with sides some eighty miles deep and a base of sixty; the apex being at Wolvehoek, on the Pretoria-Kroonstad railway, about twenty miles south of the Vaal River. The enclosing line from thence extended southward to Kroonstad, and was formed of blockhouses, barbed-wire fences, armored trains, and troops. The base line extended across eastward, so as to place the districts of Lindley and Reitz to the north of it, when it took a northern direction, at the junction with the Wilge River, west of Reitz, and followed that stream up to Frankfort; crossing from thence, northwest, to rejoin the western line at Wolvehoek, enclosing Heilbron in its sweep.

The base line east from Kroonstad was held by mixed bodies of infantry and cavalry, with blockhouses, trenches, and barbed wire; while the line going north to Frankfort was composed almost entirely of mounted troops, so posted that they were practically in touch over a distance of forty miles.

The great plan which thus demanded the services of twenty-three columns in its execution required the closing in of the eastern line and that of the base upon the western, or railway, line where armored trains, guns, and searchlights were to deal with the hunted Boers when forced in that direction by the moving walls of enemies behind. This was to be the culminating scene in the vast "drive." The quarry was inside the net. It only remained to draw the strings and to kill or capture the doomed game.

On the night of the 5th or 6th it is believed that De Wet and Steyn assembled their officers and men in the valley of the Rhenoster River, between Lindley and Heilbron, and took council how best to escape the latest Kitchener sweeping scheme. There was only one practicable way out of the net, and that was by the plan which had always suggested itself on similar occasions. The commando would split into small sections, make feints upon certain points of the surrounding line, far apart, trust to the usual blundering of the enemy for chances, and to rely upon all or any of these for avenues or opportunities to reach the veldt beyond the surrounding foemen.

Once more the great Commandant showed himself the splendid tactician the admiring world recognizes him to be. Attacks were made at a dozen points in the darkness of the night of the 7th. The enemy's guns responded, all along the line, where suspected Boers were believed to be; and in the general confusion and excitement thus made some cattle were driven against the wire fence in a few places and broken. Some Boers were killed; more, who had failed to get through or had blundered against a blockhouse or column, were taken prisoner; but when the twenty-three generals,

colonels, and majors in command of the twenty-three columns engaged in the performance reported upon the "bags" thus made on the morning of the 8th, neither De Wet nor Steyn were found inside the broken net.

In what particular direction, or at what point, or when, the President and the general broke through, or got away, is yet to be learned. The English give a dozen contradictory reports. One theory alleges that De Wet formed some 700 burghers into a column, dressed in khaki, commanded by an "English" officer who gave orders loudly in the khaki tongue, wheeled his men early in the morning of the 7th upon the line which barred the way to the south, and rode through in the direction of Bethlehem, unchallenged.

Such a daring and romantic stratagem would be no more than worthy of the victor in a hundred fights and emergencies requiring his rare and resourceful qualities, but it is probably no more than a guess at the means which enabled him to set the military world laughing once more at his discomfited enemy. It is certain that the newspaper-reading public of every civilized land hailed with delight the news that appeared on the morning of the 10th announcing that the most popular living personage of the age had baffled his foemen once again.

The exaggerated results of "the great drive," which were dilated upon by the Jingo press, were effectively discounted by the cold facts and figures of Lord Kitchener's weekly report on the 10th. This report, which included all the results of the operations of the entire British army in South Africa for the week, accounted for only 69 Boers killed, 17 wounded, 574 prisoners, and 57 surrenders. The number of rifles taken were 480, which shows that 237 of the prisoners were unarmed, non-combatants.

All the facts, therefore, even on the English showing, go to demonstrate that the huge drive which was to have crushed De Wet was turned by him into a huge fiasco for Lord Kitchener.

In the Calvinia district of Cape Colony, a British detachment of 100 troops were attacked and driven in upon their column, with 25 killed and wounded, during this week.

Commandant Malan scored a smart victory over a British convoy escort between Beaufort West and Fraserburg, in Cape Colony, a few days back. The English, about 160 strong, in charge of 60 donkey wagons, and under the command of Major Crofton, laagered for the night in a strong position. Resorting to the very elementary tactics of feinting to assail one side of the camp while intending the real attack on the opposite side, Malan rushed the laager at midnight from the south, and captured it; Crofton and

about a dozen of his men being killed, while some 50 more British were wounded. The Boers galloped into the camp, and fired from their saddles; the encounter resembling in many of its features De Wet's brilliant feat at Tweefontein on Christmas Eve. Malan took some of the wagons, and burned the others. Large reenforcements arrived for the enemy before the Boer force completed its victory, and with these Malan fought a retiring engagement. Tho greatly outnumbered, he got his men and some of the British booty away, with trifling losses on his own side.

In the center of Cape Colony, in the Richmond region, Commandant Wessels still holds his ground, thus connecting a continued line of Boer operations across from east to west of the Colony, despite all General French's efforts to drive the invaders back over the Orange River.

On the 12th a portion of De Wet's force who had broken through Kitchener's big "net" on the 7th and 8th, were located on some hills near Klip River Station by the British. This district is almost surrounded by blockhouses, and lies, in addition, between the two main railway lines running to Johannesburg and Pretoria from the Free State and Natal, respectively. The Klip River flows south from near Johannesburg, almost parallel with the railway, and falls into the Vaal River close by the boundary station of Vereeniging. To the east of Vereeniging, and stretching as far as Heidelberg, there are broken ranges of "rands," or low hills, with the general name of Zuikerboshrand, and it was to the shelter of these hills that Commandants Alberts, Grobler, and Van der Westhuizen took the men whom they had led through the northern section of the Kitchener cordon.

The position into which they rode ought to have been a closer trap to enter and a far more difficult one to escape from than the wider area from which they had broken away four days previously.

A British force, stated to have been 320 strong, under Major Dowell, was sent from Vereeniging to dislodge the burghers. These latter appear to have been a smaller body than their pursuers. They were observed by the garrison at Vereeniging when on the trek to the Zuikerbosh. The troops detailed for the attack upon them would not be sent, by any intelligent officer, in inferior numbers to engage Boers occupying a position among hills. My view is that Albert's and Grobler's men numbered no more than 250 men.

Major Dowell entrained his detachment at Vereeniging, and proceeded thus to Klip River Station. He then advanced along the river, northeast to where the open veldt rises into the Zuikerbosh hills. The British officer left his horses on this veldt, under

a guard, and began to climb the low hills in search of the Boers. These tactics determined the plans of the watchful burghers, who at once divided their force; sending half round to their left to fire upon and stampede the British horses, and to assail the enemy in the rear, while the other half were to entice the English further into the hills, by a pretended "running away" maneuver which has so often led blundering British officers into the exact place in which their adroit adversaries had carefully arranged to attack them.

Major Dowell was thus easily led into a position impossible for him to hold, and soon found himself and his men fired upon from all sides. The horses had already been shot at and stampeded, and, unable to hold his men together any longer after a dozen casualties, he ordered a retreat. The Boers, seeing their chance, leaped into their saddles and rode in upon the retiring English, scattering them in all directions. Major Dowell and six other officers valiantly refused to save themselves by running away. They made a gallant stand, and were all shot down; the major being killed and the other six wounded. The mass of their men had bolted towards Klip River Station, and most of the British casualties occurred during the pursuit of these by the Boers. The English lost 10 killed and about 50 wounded in this encounter. The Boer loss was trifling.

February 16–28.—On the 18th the same Boer force scored another triumph, even nearer to Johannesburg and Pretoria than the scene of the previous defeat of the British. General Gilbert Hamilton was attacked south of Nigel, at a place called Klippan, by Grobler and Alberts, who captured some 50 Dragoons after a brief fight. There were 10 English wounded, and none killed. General Hamilton's force was declared, in the English reports, to be "too weak" to dislodge their opponents. No mention is made, however, in the English reports of the numbers engaged on either side.

It has just been discovered that a Boer prisoner who was taken some weeks ago after a skirmish in Cape Colony, is Judge Kock, eldest son of General Jan Kock, who was wounded at Elandslaagte and died from exposure and neglect at the hands of the enemy. Judge Kock was fighting as a common burgher when captured. In 1896 he presided over the Court before which Jameson and the other captured leaders of the "Raid" were tried in Pretoria.

On the 20th three British columns surprised Colonel Trichardt's laagers northeast of Middelburg, Transvaal, and captured 150 prisoners. It is said in the reports that one of the laagers was that of the Transvaal Government, but that the members of the

Executive had succeeded in escaping. They were probably encampments of sick and of non-combatants only, as no casualties are reported.

The latest news of General De Wet reports him as having broken back north (after his ride south out of Kitchener's net) into the very district of Reitz, from whence some 30,000 British troops succeeding in driving him twelve days ago, when he objected to being captured. No stronger proof of the failure, so far, of the blockhouse system to end the war could be given than this return of the Free State general into the very center of the sphere of its most elaborate development and application. The defeat of Dowell and Hamilton's forces, inside even a narrower and stronger-fenced area, since the great failure of the 7th and 8th, by a section of De Wet's men, almost justifies the name "blockhead" system which the irreverent Boers have given to this latest offspring of England's military genius.

Following the general plan of concerted action which Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey have adopted during the past year, as a means of relieving each other of the enemy's pressure when directed in detail against either of the chief cooperating commandoes, De la Rey delivered a smashing blow at one of Lord Methuen's columns and convoys on the early morning of the 25th. The locality of this latest Boer victory is also very significant. Like the fights at Klip River and Nigel, it took place within the hearing of a strong British garrison, alongside a Kitchener area of blockhouses and barbed-wire fences, and close to a railway line.

The scene of the encounter was about a dozen miles southwest of Klerksdorp, which is the terminus of the railway running westward from the Rand through Potchefstroom; a distance of about eighty miles from Johannesburg. Klerksdorp is also the chief British garrison in the southwest Transvaal, and has been taken and retaken by the opposing forces several times during the war. The district west and north of the town has seen more fighting during the past two years than any other locality in the theater of operations, excepting De Wet's region in the northeastern Free State. Klerksdorp has been for some time past the base for British operations against General De la Rey and his chief lieutenants, who are defending the western regions of the Transvaal against Lord Methuen's and other British columns, and convoys are periodically sent out from there to such smaller garrisons as are held by the English in minor towns or villages, west and south.

On the night of the 24th, one of such convoys, with an escort of 700 troops, composed of the 5th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, forming part of Colonel Von Donop's column of Methuen's force,

encamped near a spruit, on the convoy's return from Wolmaranstad to Klerksdorp. They were mounted troops, had two guns and a pom-pom, and were commanded by Colonel Anderson.

Yster Spruit, twelve miles southwest of Klerksdorp, runs due south into the Vaal River, and cuts the road from Wolmaranstad to Klerksdorp with one of the usual water-worn hollows peculiar to South Africa. The English laagered to the north of this spruit, with the Vaal River to their right, the scrubby veldt to their left, and the road to Klerksdorp right before them, running through their camp.

The movements of convoys to and from Wolmaranstad were known, of course, to the vigilance of De la Rey, and it is evident from all the facts of the fight on the 25th that the Boer general had marked this escort for attack on its return, and when near Klerksdorp; that is, when the British would least expect to be surprised. The country due north of Yster Spruit is the Lichtenburg region, De la Rey's native district, and every inch of it is known to the great Commandant. It is a "mixed" country of rands, veldt, and scrub, and well suited to the execution of one of those dashing exploits for which De la Rey's name is now synonymous.

During the night of the 24th, he rode in, probably from the region of the Haartebeest hills, with a force about equal to that of the British, and disposed of his men so as to attack the enemy in the early morning. He separated his command into three divisions, in accurate anticipation of what the British would do when surprised, and results answered in every detail to his plan and expectations. A body of men three miles in front of Colonel Anderson would prevent the intervention of reenforcements from Klerksdorp, where the guns would be heard when the action began; a force on the enemy's left flank, under cover of the scrub, would do the chief work of the first attack, while the hollow spruit, in the rear of the English, would offer shelter for those burghers who were to engage the rear-guard, and to create the demoralizing impression on the Tommies that they were being assailed by the usual "superior Boer forces," on all sides.

The British were fired upon from the scrub, to their left, when the convoy began to move off shortly after four o'clock on the morning of the 25th. The distance between the Boers in the low bush and the flank of the escort was only 500 yards. The Boers had worked up as close as this to the enemy's lines in the night time, owing doubtless to the very careless scouting and picket work of the English, so near the end of their journey back to Klerksdorp. The British returned the fire with both rifles and

guns, and gave all their attention to the assailants of their left flank. The attack eased off for a while, and the convoy recommenced its march, when De la Rey's men swept in and over the rear-guard of the English, firing from their saddles, in utter disregard of the enemy's guns. They galloped along the confused line of their foes, overwhelming them by their dash, and riding down all opposition.

The Klerksdorp garrison despatched a reenforcement of 200 mounted men on hearing the guns, but these were encountered by a detachment of burghers who held them back on the road until Colonel Anderson's force was smashed, the guns taken, and the capture of the convoy escort completed.

According to the English report Colonel Anderson had 20 men killed, with about 100 men wounded. All the others were taken prisoner, disarmed, and immediately released, as usual.

The English give the strength of Colonel Anderson's column at 600, and that of De la Rey's at "from 1,200 to 1,700 rifles." This is, obviously, the kind of report which the British supply on all such occasions. Their casualties alone mount up to 650, when the lists are scrutinized, while it has been found a fairly accurate rule to dock British estimates of the Boer strength in a Boer victory by at least 100 per cent. of men. At Magersfontein Lord Methuen reported there were some 16,000 Boers in front of him. There were really only one-fourth of that number. At Colenso General Buller estimated Louis Botha's commandoes to be equal in men to the British troops—said by the Boers to be 23,000, and admitted by the English to be, at least, 16,000. As a matter of actual fact, Botha's burghers at Colenso numbered under 5,000.

In this instance De la Rey's whole force would probably be the complement of the British escort. Allowing for the men detailed for the purpose of holding back the Klerksdorp reenforcements, the Boers actually engaged in settling accounts with the convoy escort would be under rather than over the number of British rifles opposed to their attack. It is a patent absurdity to conjecture, as Lord Kitchener does in his report, that all the burghers of the West Transvaal, and all De la Rey's chief officers, concentrated at Yster Spruit to deal with 700 British troops, mainly composed of Yeomanry. Kemp may have been with his chief, and probably Potgieter, but Celliers and Lemmer (killed several times already in British reports), Wolmarans and Vermaas, were in all likelihood engaged in other districts. Commandant Liebenberg, who has operated in the Klerksdorp country during the past year, may have been where his intimate local knowledge of the ground would be of great assistance in the execution of De la Rey's coup.

The English reports speak of the gallantry of the British rear-guard, which was composed of Northumberland Fusiliers, and give an all-round praise to the performance of their own side. The casualties do attest both the fierce nature of the Boer attack, and the stubborn resistance that was made by a portion of Colonel Anderson's troops. But there are no facts connected with the fight so dominant and significant as those which, even on English testimony, speak of the gallop of the Boers in upon their enemies, even after the full morning light had revealed the whole situation to the English, and some two hours after the encounter had first commenced. Two English guns and a pom-pom, a compact force of 700 British, carts and wagons to fight behind, and a British garrison a few miles ahead, offered no effective check to the splendid corps of mounted burghers who dashed in upon and rode down an enemy whose organs in the press have boasted again and again of the reluctance of the Boer "to face cold steel." Men who not only do so, but face, fight, and capture English guns, in broad daylight, from a force equal to their own, without the help of artillery, are silent about their own deeds. They let the narratives of their surrendered prisoners speak the moral of the victory so gained to those who can only hope that numbers alone will wear down or subdue a foeman equal to such courage and resource.

Two days after the disaster to Colonel Anderson's force, a report of Lord Kitchener attempted to redress the balance of damaged prestige by its story of the capture of (singular coincidence!) the same number of Boers in the southeastern Free State as the English taken by De la Rey in the southwestern Transvaal.

The report relates that a number of Boers, about 700 strong, tried to break through the northeast side of the Kitchener Free State "net," still stretched, along the Wilge River. They drove a huge herd of "6,000 cattle" (how these had got inside the net, which was cleared a fortnight previously, is not told) against the section of the line held by New Zealand Volunteers. These shot back both beasts and men. The Boers lay down behind the dead animals, and returned the fire. They were beaten off, and are said to have gone south, pressed by pursuing troops until they were forced up against the Harrismith-Van Reenan line of blockhouses and barbed wire, where they were ultimately captured. Adding to these the other "bags" of the week's operations (including 2,000 horses, 28,000 cattle, and 60,000 sheep) the English Commander-in-Chief declared, "These satisfactory results are very appropriate on Majuba Day!" It illustrates the state of mind into which Lord Kitchener has been driven by the events of this war, that he should have attempted, in this reference to Majuba, to ignore the signifi-

cance of De la Rey's victory at Yster Spruit by a statistical array of cattle and sheep, as a marked demonstration of military capacity on the part of an army of 230,000 British troops.

The Boers taken near the Harrismith line were mostly non-combatants. They comprised the camp-followers, cattle drivers, and attendants of some of the fighting sections of De Wet's forces, along with old men. The number of fighting Boers put out of action would probably correspond with the casualties among the New Zealanders in the fight on the 23rd. These are given at 20 killed and 38 wounded in the English reports.

The month closes with this report from Pretoria, relating to the capture of the British convoy and escort on the 25th :

"Kekewich's and Grenfell's columns are pursuing De la Rey's forces, which are reported to have scattered. Lord Methuen has started with a column from Vryburg towards Lichtenburg, to try to intercept the enemy."

March 1-7.—Accounts from Boer sources of the killed and wounded on their side in the fights at Itala Mount and Fort Prospect, in September last, and at Brakenlaagte in October, have come to hand. H. S. Oosterhagen, of the Transvaal Identity Department, certifies in a communication dated December 12, 1901, that the number of Boers killed at Itala and Fort Prospect was a total of 16, and that 4 more out of 41 wounded, died. At Brakenlaagte, where Colonel Benson's rear-guard was overwhelmed by Christian Botha, the Boer casualties were 13 burghers killed, and 40 wounded. Lord Kitchener's estimate put down 44 killed and 100 wounded to the British account; or near 150 per cent. above the actual Boer losses.

These figures offer an illuminating comment upon English reports of losses inflicted upon the Boers. Reuter had cabled from Ladysmith that 300 Boers were left dead on the field, after the "failure" of the attacks upon Forts Itala and Prospect.

In a "Life of Count Villebois-Mareuil" by his friend M. Jules Caplain, which has just been published in Paris, the author clearly shows that the gallant French officer met his fate at Boshof, in April, 1900, not by a shell, as was generally stated and believed at the time, but by a rifle fired almost point blank at him, on refusing to lay down his arms. In my account of the fight, in Chapter XXV, I give the common version of how he was killed.

The "General" Vilonel who is at present exciting the admiration of the English by his boastful letters to President Steyn and General De Wet, published in the British press, is the Benedict Arnold of the Boer armies. He is a man on the youthful side of

thirty, and of good address and education. He fought in the Free State commandoes in the early stages of the war. A too ardent ambition to rise rapidly in military rank caused him to become insubordinate, and he was, in consequence, relegated to the distasteful task of commandeering. This duty was the anti-climax to his dreams of distinction, and he became discontented. From this frame of mind to actual treachery was a transition resulting from wounded vanity, and he deserted to the British.

He supplied the enemy with information relating to the movements and plans of General De Wet and President Steyn, and engaged in the work of seducing other Boer officers to follow his base example. One of his letters was intercepted by a Free State Intelligence Officer, and an appointment was made for an interview. The traitor fell into the trap, was captured, and put upon trial for treason.

The trial took place at Reitz, in the northeast of the Free State, which was then the seat of Government. So merciful did the Boer Court view the abominable crime of which the culprit was proved guilty, that he was sentenced only to five years' imprisonment.

Against this lenient penalty he appealed, and his application was allowed. The second trial took place at Fouriesburg, and was presided over by Judge (now Commandant) Hertzog. The prisoner defended himself. He pleaded that he had acted in obedience to his conscientious feeling, and threw himself on the mercy of the Court. The Judge confirmed the former sentence, declaring that the name of Vilonel would be forever synonymous in Boer memory and tradition with that of traitor to their country and cause.

Subsequently the English surprised the place where Vilonel was imprisoned, and he was liberated. He was thus restored to the labor of treachery for which he had been so leniently punished by a Boer tribunal, and is now the malignant enemy of those who had considerately spared his life. He has become a leader of the "National" Scouts at Bloemfontein, and it is the vaporings of this man which are at present inspiring the English with renewed hope in an early termination of the war.

A petition numerously signed has been presented to the Senate of the Australian Commonwealth, praying that all Australian Volunteers serving with the British in South Africa should be recalled. The petitioners say:

"Our Australian troops, in certain cases against their will, have been largely engaged in this horrible work of burning down the means and results of a people's industry and subsistence, of sub-

jecting their women and children to deportation and disease, and of leaving a vast region of God's once fertile earth a barren waste."

News received from Cape Colony through German and Dutch channels gives details of the execution of Commandant Scheepers, which were not found in the English reports of that military murder. It appears that he was conducted to the place of execution by his enemies, with a military band playing exultingly in the procession! He was so ill that he was conveyed there in an ambulance. He manfully requested to be allowed to stand up, and to face his executioners with unbandaged eyes. This request was refused. The firing party detailed for the task of killing him stood ten paces off, and the reports relate that half his body was blown away by the volley. The chair to which the young and gallant officer had been strapped was then broken up, and the fragments thrown on top of the body of this victim of English savagery. The execution took place on the 21st of January, and the Minister responsible to the British Parliament for the conduct of the war in South Africa had "no information" on this matter on the 7th of March when questioned if these details of Scheepers' execution were in accordance with facts.

March 8-15.—At the close of the last month, when forwarding a final account of the defeat and capture of one of Lord Methuen's columns and convoys, Lord Kitchener cabled from Pretoria that Kekewich's and Grenfell's columns "were pursuing De la Rey's forces," and that Methuen, with another column, "had started from Vryburg towards Lichtenburg to try and intercept the enemy." The publication of this news was a piece of the usual English bluster and bluff which has passed with the British public for military efficiency on the part of their generals throughout this war. The great Boer general has his own independent intelligence department, however, and in this instance he would seem to have known much more about Methuen's movements than Lord Kitchener or the English War Office.

After his defeat of Colonel Anderson on the 25th of February, De la Rey retired northwest from Klerksdorp to the Haartebeest hills, which form an irregular dividing line, running north and south, between the Potchefstroom and Lichtenburg districts of the Western Transvaal. These hills have been a center of De la Rey's defensive operations since he took charge of this division of the Republic, following the battle of Dalmanutha and the departure of President Kruger for Europe. It is from their shelter he has often witnessed the English armies making their devastating marches through the very district in which he was born on

the one hand, and of the country southwest of Klerksdorp on the other; to follow and strike at any one of them which might not in its strength in men and guns be too unequal a force for his commando to engage. Here in this favorite and familiar haunt the General awaited the developments which would necessarily follow from the defeat he had inflicted upon the enemy's column at Yster Spruit.

Lord Methuen was at Vryburg when Colonel Anderson's column met with its mishap on the 25th of last month. A direct line westward for about ninety miles from where De la Rey was located on the evening of that date, would pass a little to the north of the town of Vryburg, which is roughly about midway between Kimberley and Mafeking, on the railway line from Cape Town to Bulawayo. It is the chief British garrison after Klerksdorp for the southwestern Transvaal, and lies a little over the western border, in the Bechuanaland territory.

Methuen started from Vryburg on the 2nd of March with a force of about 1,000 mounted men and 300 or 400 infantry; making a column of 1,400 troops, with a convoy of supplies for his force. He had four guns and one or two pom-poms.

His march lay northeastward in a line parallel with the Harts River, which has a course southwestward through the Lichtenburg district. At Graspan Methuen would have a farm of General De la Rey's twelve miles to his right. Two marches north of this point he came in touch with a small Boer force under Van Zyl, whose homestead lies a few miles westward of De la Rey's. This was on the 5th, or three days after Methuen had left Vryburg. Van Zyl was on reconnaissance in connection with De la Rey's plans, and acted as a decoy for the British column, which was compelled to move slowly owing to its ox convoy. It is evident that Methuen followed Van Zyl's retreating burghers, and that these retired towards where De la Rey intended that the attack upon his old adversary of Enslin, Modder River, and Magersfontein was to be made. This spot is close by the Klein Harts River, in an open country, almost due west of Klerksdorp, and about a dozen miles from the hills from whence De la Rey was to swoop down upon his foe.

The Boer attack was again planned for the early morning, but, unlike the surprise at Yster Spruit, this encounter was to be a rush upon the rear of the enemy's column; the slow-moving ox-wagons in the front being a guaranty to the calculating Boer general that Methuen's force would not march ahead of the convoy to any strong position lying in that direction.

The success of Van Zyl's decoying tactics enabled De la Rey to

swing his commando to the south of Methuen's force in a night ride. He would proceed for this purpose due south from the Haartebeest hills, parallel with the Makewassi Spruit, for about ten miles, and, crossing this stream, sweep westward towards the Harts River, where, at or near Rooikraal, he would find himself in the early morning of the 6th in the immediate rear of the English column on its slow march north towards where Methuen expected to join hands with two other British forces.

The Boer movement was calculated to a mile, and to time, with De la Rey's accustomed precision; every inch of the ground being known to him. In the ride across from the Makewassi Spruit to the west, he would pass within a dozen miles of his own farm, which lies in the center of the fertile country the English have turned into a howling desert of ruined homesteads. He was thus sure of his ground, and no less confident that he was about to inflict upon the person of the general who had committed most of this ruin a chastisement which would ring round the world, and proclaim again the indomitable character of the Boer resistance to British aggression.

De la Rey's plan of attack was to be one of his irresistible rushes upon the enemy; a charge in the fine old style of cavalry fighting, which has so often broken down all British resistance, and smashed to atoms the boasted prowess of English valor in this war. It was not in any sense to be an ambush, or surprise attack. The Boer general had maneuvered, by aid of Van Zyl's skirmishes, to bring Methuen into the locality where the superb burgher horsemen could sweep in upon all sides of the enemy, and where real fighting capacity should decide the fortunes of the day. The English would not have it to say that they were fired upon from behind rocks, or assailed from the cover of scrub, or other shelter. It was to be a combat in the open, almost between equal numbers —for De la Rey's force, even according to British estimates, was said to be only a few hundred more than Methuen's. The enemy, however, had the advantage in artillery and machine guns.

The English reports of the fight admit that De la Rey's men were clearly seen three miles away, on the early morning of the 6th. This fact enabled Lord Methuen to collect his lines to meet the attack. He closed these in upon the ox and mule convoys ahead, and had his guns ready to meet the impact of the Boer rush.

A noted incident in this memorable fight was the refusal of De la Rey to use the guns he had captured at Yster Spruit a few days previously; that is, in the first instance. He knew, of course, that Methuen had artillery, and all the ordinary practises of war-

fare would dictate the shelling of the enemy, as a preliminary to a charge upon his position. But the great Boer general knew more than military tacticians teach in their manuals. He knew that men count before everything in successful attacks, and sure of the stamina of those around him in their saddles, and counting at their right value the troops he was about to assail, he relegated the services of his guns to a subsequent part of the action, and resolved to rush his whole commando in a resistless ride on Methuen's column, and overwhelm Tommies, guns, convoy, and all.

This he did in a kind of crescent-shaped sweep upon the enemy's rear-guard, enveloping their flanks at the same time. Despite the labored attempts of Lord Kitchener and of privileged press correspondents to represent the English as making determined stands, fighting coolly and gallantly, and all the rest, the combat was virtually over in the first charge of De la Rey's burghers upon Methuen's mounted troops. These, acting as rear-guard and as screens to the column and convoy, broke at once, and fled. There are no other words for their action. They ran away, as fast as their horses could carry them across the Harts River valley, westward to the Maribogo region, pursued for five miles by some of De la Rey's men. This, even English reports admit.

It was Methuen's infantry who stood their ground. A fight was put up by this remnant of his force, which continued for a few hours. The Boers rushed two of the English guns, shot down their service, and captured them. The other guns were also well defended, while Lord Methuen collected parts of his broken column into a neighboring kraal. He bravely discarded all thought of cover and of danger, and did all that a gallant officer could do to retrieve, in a forlorn defense of his remaining guns and convoy, the disgrace of the bolting of his mounted men in the beginning of the battle. It was now only a question of bringing the Boer guns to bear upon the kraal to finish the fight, and Commandant Celliers turned Colonel Anderson's two fifteen-pounders upon the British within the enclosure, and rendered the situation hopeless for the enemy inside.

Lord Methuen had in the meantime been wounded severely in the thigh. Colonel Townsend was also down, whereupon De la Rey summoned the enemy to surrender, and the battle was over, with about 40 English killed, 100 wounded, and all who did not run away prisoners. Lord Methuen, Lieutenant-General and second in military rank to Lord Kitchener in South Africa, fell into the hands of his chivalrous victor, with his guns, convoy, and column—or all that had remained of it on the battle-field.

The prompt release of Lord Methuen by De la Rey astounded the press of the civilized world by its knightly magnanimity. It created a painful impression among the friends of the Boer cause everywhere, by its uncalculating, and seemingly unpatriotic, generosity. Neither the captured general nor the British army merited any such consideration at Boer hands. Lord Methuen was the first English general to asperse the Boers in the war. He libeled them at Belmont, Enslin, and Modder River in unfounded charges; allegations made, too, in true English fashion, with the object of attempting to offset the true charges of Boer officers that the rules of civilized warfare had been deliberately violated by Methuen's troops at each of these battles. His officers arrested a Boer ambulance at Modder River, and sent doctors and assistants serving under Red Cross ensigns, as prisoners to Cape Town. All this was known to De la Rey, who had fought Methuen in his attempt to relieve Kimberley, and whose superb plan of aggressive defense at Magersfontein enabled Cronje to inflict upon this general and a powerful British army one of the greatest defeats of the war.

The fate, too, of Commandants Lotter and Scheepers was present to De la Rey's mind when he released his captive. These officers had been executed for burning Government buildings in Cape Colony, and for shooting armed Kaffirs. Methuen had burned farms and villages in the Transvaal and Free State, and his men had killed wounded Boers at Modder River. De la Rey's own homestead had been burned by his troops, and the entire district in which he was born—the locality in which poetic justice decreed the defeat and capture of Methuen at his hands—bore testimony to the barbarous methods resorted to by the British in their warfare against the people whom they had so monstrously wronged.

I remember General De la Rey telling me in Brandfort, in April, 1900, how his father's home had been burned, and his property destroyed by the English, in the Forties.

An ex-telegraphist in the Boer service, writing a few days ago to the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant," says that he received the following message at Pilgrimsrust, for the Transvaal Executive, from General De la Rey, last summer:

"I have also received information that my wife has been driven from our farm by Lord Methuen's column. Our farm has been destroyed, the houses have been burnt down, and my wife has been put down in a place where no houses are to be found for miles around. She has put up at a thatched Kaffir hut, where she must have stayed already a considerable time before she was found by our people. What low measures the enemy have recourse to, what

personal injuries may be inflicted upon me, tho they may grieve me to my innermost soul, there will be no abatement in my zeal to pursue our struggle to the end."

But the deeds of the British had no influence upon this Christian hero's action. He saw only a distinguished enemy in his hands, to whose wounds no Boer ambulance could attend; thanks to Kitchener's and Methuen's own measures in preventing even a Red Cross service of humanity penetrating to the Boer commandoes. Discarding every thought except what his chivalrous nature prompted him to do, De la Rey sent his captive in his own wagon to Klerksdorp, allowing him to take even his papers and personal effects along with him.

It was in every sense a noble deed, nobly done, and so the whole of Christendom has recognized and pronounced it. Such knightly courtesy arrested the thought of civilization and told it, in this one act, how unmeasurable is the moral distance which divides the Boer from the British race in all that concerns the conduct of this war. This was by no means a solitary instance of Boer generosity. Their whole treatment of prisoners has been as persistently kind and humane from the beginning as that of their enemies has been the reverse. We need only to refer to the account already given of the treatment accorded by British officers and men to General Jan Kock, who was captured while dangerously wounded at the battle of Elandslaagte, to establish this fact.

De la Rey has, however, in his release of Lord Methuen, enormously increased the prestige of the Boer cause, and gained for it the fixed adhesion of tens of thousands of wavering supporters in Europe and America. The defeat of so important a general, so soon after the capture of Colonel Anderson's column, and so near, in both instances, to the center of Lord Kitchener's authority and operations, has also an importance far beyond the mere success of the engagement. It means additional recruits for the Boer commandoes in Cape Colony, and for the English a considerable prolongation of the war. These results might also have followed had Methuen been retained as a prisoner in some Boer laager. Kritzinger's life would likewise have been saved, whereas no reliance can now be placed upon English forbearance when their general has been delivered up without any condition attaching to the release.

While Lord Methuen was still in Boer hands the English press allowed itself to be swayed for a few hours by a feeling of appreciation of De la Rey's chivalry. Lord Roberts eulogized him in the House of Lords, and even Royalty was reported to have ex-

pressed an interest in the fate of General Kritzinger—the day following the disaster at Tweebosh. When, however, the titled officer was back in the English lines, the British press reverted again to its more congenial task of maligning the Boers. They had worn khaki, and were dressed in English uniforms, and, therefore, fought unfairly. These papers omitted to charge the Boers at the same time with using English rifles and guns served with English ammunition, as well. From the point of view of the English press, all this goes to establish the bad faith of the Boers. The English will not, or cannot, see the side of the Boer character which enables the remnant of a little nation to strip British soldiers of their clothes, rifles, and ammunition with which to keep up the struggle for independence. The troops who allow themselves to be so stripped and disarmed, frequently by inferior numbers of burghers, are lauded by the same British press for their soldierly qualities, but the men who fight a huge army with its own weapons and convoys, captured in the dashing style of Yster Spruit and Tweebosh, are men to be shot if caught in the clothes of the yielding British Tommies.

On March 26, 1902, Cecil Rhodes died near Cape Town of heart disease.

Following so soon after the defeat and capture of Lord Methuen, the death of the organizer and paymaster of the infamous Jameson Raid is another blow to England in this war of repeated disasters to her arms and prestige. In the sense that the Raid of 1895-6 was the cause of the present war, Mr. Rhodes can be said to have been the senior partner with Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner in the responsibility for the crime against civilization and humanity which is still creating misery, bloodshed, and horror in South Africa. Mr. Rhodes and others coveted the Rand mines just as other Englishmen and associated adventurers had coveted the diamond mines of Kimberley. These succeeded in persuading a previous Colonial Secretary and High Commissioner to violate a treaty bearing England's signature, in order that the Boers should not be the masters of a piece of territory so fabulously rich. What was done with the Sand River Treaty of 1852 was repeated with the London Convention of 1884. Diamonds and gold were weighed against treaties and conventions, and the national honor and international credit and character of England were relegated to a secondary place.

The man whom the Boers believe to be the author of the war has gone to his account. He has not seen the success of the plans which have plunged the Republic he wished to despoil into its present condition and have dragged the Empire he was ambitious

to widen and enrich into the Serbonian bog of disaster and disgrace where it still flounders. Unless satisfactory terms are accorded to his leaders, the ragged burgher contending valiantly for his country and freedom, even tho hope appears to have deserted his cause, will fight on with renewed belief in God's protecting power when he learns that Cecil Rhodes has been summoned to the judgment seat of the Almighty.

Chapter XL

SUMMARY AND ESTIMATES

ACCOUNTS OF MINOR CONFLICTS OMITTED—WIDE EXTENT OF BOER RESISTANCE—BRITISH CASUALTIES IN ONE MONTH (JANUARY, 1902) OCCUR IN 334 PLACES—EXTRAORDINARY FACTS REVEALED BY KITCHENER'S FIGURES—ONLY 1,315 BOERS AGAINST 220,000 BRITISH ON JANUARY 1, 1902—EXPLANATION OF THE ANOMALY—EITHER NON-COMBATANTS WERE CAPTURED OR SURRENDERED MEN KILLED—NUMBER OF CAPTURED RIFLES (8,000), A TRUER INDEX OF MEN PUT OUT OF ACTION—AUTHOR ESTIMATES BOER FORCE ON JANUARY 1, 1902 TO BE 12,000—BRITISH FORCE, 237,800—BRITISH PUT OUT OF ACTION IN WAR, 115,000—ENGLAND'S WAR ON A NATION OF 232,000 PEOPLE—27,000 BOER MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN PUT OUT OF ACTION—156,000 HELD IN PRISONS AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS—12,000 ARE IN ARMS—37,000 AT LARGE—HEAVY LOSSES OF BOERS IN OFFICERS—THE FOUR GREATEST LEADERS, BOTHA, DE WET, DE LA REY, AND STEYN, SURVIVE.

I HAVE omitted in my weekly summaries of hostilities and of events relating directly to the war most of the reports in which Lord Kitchener gave the British account of the work accomplished by his army. This was done to economize space and not with the object of ignoring the many "mishaps" inflicted upon the Boers. For a kindred reason I have not mentioned scores of small engagements in which the English got the worst of the encounter. Skirmishes, outpost affairs, attacks on blockhouses, the daily work of scouts, etc., along the entire extent of the field of operations, have necessarily been passed over. They could not be included, even if accurately known in their details, in this compressed narrative of the war from the Boer standpoint, in anything like the space which a single volume affords.

Let me give my readers an illustration, not so much of this self-evident proposition as of the far-reaching, sleepless, and most effective resistance which this marvelous people are making against their leviathan opponent. I take the month of January, 1902, as an example. According to a most careful scrutiny of the casualty lists published by the British War Office, English soldiers were killed, wounded, made prisoners, or otherwise put out of action in no less than 334 different places, in the Transvaal, Free State, Cape Colony, and Bechuanaland, from the 1st to the 31st of that one month, inclusive.

Carefully censored accounts of the Boer campaign in Cape Colony also concealed the extent to which British territory was overrun by comparatively small commandoes during 1901. This invasion of the enemy's country in December, 1900, for the second time in the war, and immediately after Lord Roberts had informed the world that the war was ended, put the huge British army then in South Africa in a humiliating light. It plainly indicated to Europe that a force of over 250,000 English troops were unable to prevent such an invasion by a force of Boers ten times less numerous. This invasion was also a great danger to the enemy's position. It threatened a revolt in the rear of his main columns, and menaced his chief lines of transport and communication. Very little reliable news has, therefore, been allowed to reach the public about the practical impunity with which the invading bodies roamed over British territory during 1901; south of the Orange River, almost to the sea, at Mossel Bay; and westward, from Barkly East to Saldanha Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

The original invading commandoes led by Judge Hertzog, George Brand, and Commandant Kritzinger soon split into smaller bodies, so as to spread themselves over wider areas. These sections found secondary leaders in Lotter, Scheepers, Fouche, Myburgh, Maritz, Theron, Van Niekirk, Van Reenan, Smit, Fourie, Louw, Van der Venter, and others. General (Attorney-General) Smuts joined in the invasion in September last, and is now at the head of the largest Boer force in the Colony.

With the exception of what is recorded of the work done by the four or five Chief Commandants of the fifteen or twenty invading detachments, I have been unable to gather information of what the bulk of these small bodies have done in Cape Colony, or in the British territory north of the Orange River, during the period of last year. This part of the Boer fight for freedom has yet to be told.

The Cape Dutch who joined the invaders from the Free State would, in all likelihood, cross the Orange River soon after, and attach themselves to the forces under De Wet, Botha, and De la Rey. They would, naturally, do this in preference to fighting where English officials and spies could take note of the action of local "rebels," and the efforts of such volunteers on the side of the Republic are mostly merged in the general record of the main Boer commandoes.

The success of Lord Kitchener's operations against the widely scattered Boer forces in 1901 is to be measured by the number of opponents his columns have killed and captured, and the extent to which he has weakened the remaining Boer powers of resistance

We have, however, only the English reports of this success. These have been published every week in Lord Kitchener's despatches from Pretoria.

I have gone carefully through these weekly reports for the whole of 1901, and the figures come out as follows: Boers killed, 1,692; wounded, 985; prisoners, 11,983; surrendered, 3,683; giving a total, under these four heads, of 18,343 Boers put out of action during the year.

If these figures are even approximately accurate, they reveal some extraordinary facts. In August last Lord Kitchener estimated the number of Boers in the field against him, in the month of July, at 13,500. From the 1st of August to the 31st of December, his weekly reports account for 12,185 Boers killed, wounded, prisoners, and surrendered; a figure which would leave only 1,315 Boers in front of his 220,000 British troops on the last day of the year.

It will be seen from the figures which give the numbers of killed and wounded, according to the weekly Kitchener "bags," that the latter amount to only 60 per cent. of the former, for the Boer casualties during the twelve months. The average in the British casualties during the same period, and throughout the war, is one killed to five wounded; a ratio which also, I think, about measures the disablements in ordinary civilized warfare. What inference, therefore, do Lord Kitchener's anomalous figures suggest?

The English may say that the Boers succeeded in carrying off the balance of their wounded. Their total wounded, on a list of 1,692 killed—allowing for the same average as that of the English casualties—would be 8,460. Lord Kitchener's reports account for only 985. The English theory would therefore mean that the Boers who left 11,000 of their number as prisoners in British hands, succeeded in taking away 7,475 of their wounded in the various encounters which resulted in these casualties. This is, obviously, an absurdity.

The real explanation of Lord Kitchener's figures is this: Most of the prisoners mentioned as such in his weekly reports were non-combatants, women, children, and unarmed men. These were captured, mainly, in laagers, as camp followers of the commandoes. These laagers, which also contained stock and wagons, were as a rule surprised by British forces in the early hours of the morning, and were, in almost all instances, defended by only a small number of armed men. In many cases there was no resistance offered, according to the ordinary reports of these British successes given to the public.

Adding the 1,692 Boers killed in 1901, to the 985 who were wounded, we have a total of 2,677. One-fifth of that number would

be 535, which ought to be the number of killed in that total, according to the average English casualties; a figure which would leave 1,157 to the wounded category in the same calculation.

If Lord Kitchener's reports are correct, in relation to the killed and wounded on the Boer side during last year, his troops stand guilty of having killed 1,157 men in laagers, when beaten or in the act of surrendering, over and above the number which ought to have been killed in these encounters.

What has to be done with these figures is to eliminate eight-tenths of the prisoners from the class of combatants; most of them being women, children, old men, and non-fighters; and to reckon only the killed, wounded, and surrendered as the real extent to which the combative burgher forces have been reduced in 1901. These would total to about 6,000, in round numbers. Add to these 2,000 more out of the 11,000 prisoners, as representing the adult fighting element found among them, and we get the figure of 8,000, which will be the approximate total reduction of the Boer resisting forces during the year. As Lord Kitchener's "bags" account for some 7,000 or 8,000 rifles only, from January to December, it is obvious that my estimate, which places the number of effective Boers put out of action at or about the number of rifles taken, is nearer the truth than the British general's figures, which total to 18,000 men, and leave over 10,000 rifles unaccounted for.

My estimate of the number of armed fighting burghers in the field on the first of January, 1902, is 12,000, with Cape Colony as still a potential recruiting ground for more men.

The total British forces employed in the war, and the casualties suffered by them up to the 1st of January, 1902, are given as follows in British official reports:

Garrison in South Africa on August 1, 1899 . .	9,940
Regulars:	
Troops from Home and British Colonies . . .	207,911
Troops from India	11,651
Colonials:	
Troops from Colonies other than South Africa .	18,568
Troops raised in South Africa	52,414
Militia	33,958
Imperial Yeomanry	28,385
Volunteers from United Kingdom	17,341
South African Constabulary from United Kingdom	6,889
South African Constabulary from Canada . .	1,238
Scottish Horse	454
Total	388,749

When war began, on the 11th of October, 1899, the English had 22,400 men in South Africa; all regular troops.

By the month of July, 1900, the British forces in the field had increased to 260,000 men, while up to the 31st of December, 1901, the above enormous total of 388,749 had been engaged in the warfare carried on against the Boer commandoes.

On the 1st of January, 1902, the following British forces were still in the field:

Regulars	141,700
Militia	19,750
Imperial Yeomanry	13,650
Volunteers	5,400
Colonials (including Town Guards, etc.)	57,300
Total	237,800

The British casualties, officially admitted, during the whole campaign, up to the 31st of January, 1902, are given as under:

	Officers.	Men.
Killed in action	473	4,841
Died of wounds	166	1,697
Prisoners who have died in captivity	5	97
Died of disease	286	11,523
Accidental deaths	21	577
Total deaths in South Africa	951	18,735
Missing and prisoners (excluding those who have been recovered or have died in captivity	7	432
Sent home as invalids	2,731	63,603
Total casualties in South Africa	3,689	82,770
	86,459	

To these figures must be added the total number of British prisoners taken by the Boers, and the sick troops in hospital in South Africa at the present time. The former would total to, at least, 15,000, while 14,000 will probably represent the latter; making a grand total of 115,459 Englishmen put out of action during the campaign.

The Boer forces and losses figure out as follows: The English having made war on the whole Boer nation, men, women, and children, the entire Boer population of the two little Republics would represent the "army" opposed to the 388,000 English troops.

The Boer population of the Transvaal and Free State in 1899 is not accurately known. The general estimates were for

The South African Republic	130,000
The Orange Free State	90,000
Giving a total Boer population of	220,000
Add Cape Colony and other Volunteers . . .	12,000
Making a Grand Total of	232,000

I estimate the casualties of the Boer armies up to December 31, 1901, as follows:

Burghers killed in the field	3,000
Burghers who died of wounds and sickness	2,000
Children killed in the concentration camps	14,000
Non-combatants, men and women, who have died in the ordinary course of nature, at the rate of 20 per 1,000, for two years, say	8,000
Total killed and died	27,000
Men, women, and children imprisoned in the concentration camps (estimated)	120,000
Combatants and non-combatants in prisons in St. Helena, Ceylon, India, Bermuda, and elsewhere (estimated) . .	36,000
Burghers still fighting, say	12,000
Leaving Boer men, women, and children unaccounted for in the Transvaal and Free State to the number of . .	37,000
Total	232,000

The number of soldiers put in the field by England during the war thus outnumbered the entire Boer population of the two Republics by more than 150,000 men.

Putting one-fourth of the Boer population unaccounted for in the war statistics down as males, and assuming that one-third of these are old enough, physically fit, and willing to bear arms—and may yet do so—this would add about 3,500 to the potential Boer forces; making, with the 12,000 estimated to be now on commando, a total of 15,500 men yet to be killed, captured, or otherwise disposed of before the war is completely ended.

The Boer losses in officers during 1901 has been severe. Generals Philip Botha, Opperman, and Ben Viljoen; Commandants Haasbroek, Fourie (of Middelburg), Kritzinger, Lotter, Scheepers, Erasmus, and fully a dozen others of secondary rank but of a

fine fighting record, have been killed, captured, or executed. These burghers were not successful leaders in the field because of their trained military capacity. Not one of them had any such training. They only possessed the ordinary Boer brains, courage, and judgment in a more marked degree than their fellows, and the fine, virile race which endowed such men with soldierly qualities that recall the military fame of Napoleon's young generals, will provide successors who may not be unworthy substitutes for the gallant leaders who have fallen fronting the enemies of Boer freedom.

The four greatest leaders the war has given to the race are still in the field. Botha and De Wet may be said to be in the prime of life. General De la Rey is aged about 53. President Steyn, perhaps the all-round most formidable enemy England's armies have to deal with, is not 50. No finer type of manhood, physical, intellectual, and moral, stands on South African soil than he who, in a chivalrous spirit worthy of the antique heroism of the pre-capitalist age, courageously faced the possible destruction of his country and the death or banishment of himself rather than basely desert the sister Republic and leave her a prey to the British despoiler. If the magnitude of a sacrifice freely made in a righteous struggle ennobles him who makes it, surely there is no nobler man to-day shaming a world of selfish and of sordid-minded men by his life and action than this Bayard of the Boer fight for freedom. It will be found, I opine, when the facts are fully known, that, just as Cronje and De la Rey owed much of the credit won by them for the victory of Magersfontein to the counsel and suggestions of Mr. Steyn, De Wet has benefited too in many of his brilliant exploits by the aid of the same keen and courageous judgment.

Chapter XLI

CONCLUSION—ENGLAND'S COWARDLY AND UNCHRISTIAN WARFARE

INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES THAT BOERS VIOLATED RULES OF WAR RESERVED FOR ANOTHER BOOK—BRITISH VIOLATIONS DISCUSSED IN THIS—CHAMBERLAIN'S HYPOCRITICAL CONTENTION THAT CONCENTRATION IS A HUMANE POLICY, FORCED UPON BRITISH BY BOTHA'S MILITARY ORDERS—THESE BEAR THE CONTRARY INTERPRETATION—MILNER CONTRADICTS CHAMBERLAIN—HE AVOWS CONCENTRATION TO BE PURELY A MILITARY MEASURE—LORD ROBERTS, WHILE DENYING GENERAL POLICY OF DEVASTATION, JUSTIFIES SPECIFIC ACTS—BULLER MAKES THREAT TO BOTHA THAT CONTINUED RESISTANCE BY BOERS WILL RESULT IN DESTRUCTION OF THEIR HOMES—HE FULFILS IT BY BURNING BOTHA'S FARM—BURNING OF FARMS OF DE WET AND OTHER BOER LEADERS—COWARDLY NATURE OF BRITISH WARFARE—EQUALED ONLY BY THE CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY CARRIED ON BY BRITISH PRESS AND GOVERNMENT—HYPOCRISY OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD—ITS SHUDDERS OVER ARMENIAN OUTRAGES—CHRISTIAN PRAYERS FOR SUCCESS OF UNCHRISTIAN WAR—HOW ENGLAND HAS MAMMONIZED THE NATIONS.

A DETAILED examination of the charges made against the Boers, by British officers and the English press, for alleged outrages against British wounded, the Red Cross flag, etc., is not possible in this volume. Any such investigation would, necessarily, demand a counter statement of Boer charges on these and upon other violations of the recognized rules of civilized warfare by the enemy. Such an investigation would require the space of another book, and abundant matter for such a supplementary volume is at my disposal, and will be published.

In the meantime, a statement made by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons, on the 20th of January, 1902, relating to the causes which are now said by the English to have led to the formation of the concentration camps, requires some examination. These are the Colonial Secretary's allegations:

"In the first place I ask them to remember how the concentration camps arose. They will find that they arose because General Botha declared his intention of burning and destroying the farms, and of compelling the inhabitants to take action and join his forces. Lord Kitchener offered to General Botha to allow these people, the women and children, to remain in their own homes, and even undertook, as far as possible, to supply them with food, if

General Botha would consent to their neutrality. General Botha's reply was clear and categorical. He said, 'I have the right to impress all these people. They will suffer if they do not come to me,' and when asked what was the alternative, he replied, 'You had better remove them out of the country, or otherwise I shall punish them.' (Ministerial cheers.) That is the first letter, but we have an intercepted letter from General Smuts to General Botha, in which he says, 'You know that with regard to the transport of women you instructed me to load them into the British lines.' (Ministerial cheers.) Then, Sir, for the humanity, unprecedented in the history of war, with which we, upon whom these women and children have been forced, have accepted the duty and responsibility in the name of humanity, we are accused of loathsome cruelty. (Ministerial cheers.)"

The dates of the letter of Botha's here referred to, and of the conversation between him and Lord Kitchener, are most important factors in the controversy, and Mr. Chamberlain did not mention them. Neither did the Colonial Secretary read the intercepted letters.

General Botha's circular—not a letter, as described—was dated the 3rd of December, 1900, and this is the document:

"From the Commandant-General to all Military Officers, Landrosts, etc.

"Whereas, it appears that there is a difference existing in the treatment of burghers who have surrendered their arms to the enemy, or have taken the oath of neutrality, and whereas it is desirable to lay down regulations for the even treatment of such burghers, therefore it is hereby resolved as follows:

"(1.) All Field Cornets are instructed to frame lists of all burghers in their wards who have laid down their arms, and taken the oath of neutrality. Herein is included the burghers who, on being called up, have again taken up arms.

"(2.) All persons liable to service whose names appear on the aforesaid lists, and who refuse, on being called up by the Field Cornet, to take up arms again, must immediately be sent up to the nearest jail for punishment according to law.

"(3.) The movable property of persons mentioned in (2) must be taken, and a proper inventory made by the Field Cornet concerned, in conjunction with his Commandant and his General of Division for commando purposes. Care must be taken in all cases that sufficient means of livelihood are left for the support of the wife and family.

"(4.) Burghers who are not fit for active service, and who have taken the oath of neutrality, must be called up before the Landrost or Field Cornet concerned therewith, to take an oath as set forth

in the form below. Those who refuse to comply must be dealt with in terms of Law No. 4 of 1900.

"(5.) All Landrosts and Field Cornets must take heed that all passes or permits issued by the enemy are returned by the burghers who again take up or have taken up arms, and by burghers who have taken the oath in terms of (4).

"FORM OF OATH

"I, the undersigned burgher of the South African Republic, declare under oath that the oath of neutrality taken by me, in the hands of the enemy, was taken by me without the sanction of my military officers, and I consider the same null and void.

"LOUIS BOTHA,
"Commandant-General."

It will be seen by a study of this circular that it does not, in any sense, bear out the interpretation placed upon its terms by Mr. Chamberlain. "Care must be taken," says General Botha, "in all cases that sufficient means of livelihood are left for the support of the wife and family," even of burghers who had sworn to give up the fight for the Republic.

There is not a syllable about burning the homes of such men, while in the intercepted letter written by General Tobias Smuts to General Botha, which is dealt with under date in the Diary of the War, it is shown that the Commandant-General actually degraded his friend and a brave officer from the rank of general for having burned the town or village of Bremersdorp, in Swaziland, after having driven a force of British and savages out of it.

With reference to the conversation between Lord Kitchener and General Botha, which took place at Middelburg, on the 28th of February, 1901, there is not a single word in Lord Kitchener's report of that interview which agrees with Mr. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons.

The report was presented to Parliament in March, 1901, and Lord Kitchener's despatch, dated March 1, is found on page 2. Its first sentence reads: "I have had a long interview with Botha, who showed very good feeling, and seemed anxious to bring about peace."

On the same page there occurs the following sentence: "He (Botha) referred to pecuniary assistance to repair burnt farms, and to enable farmers to start afresh. I said I thought some assistance would be given." In other words, at the very interview mentioned by the Colonial Secretary, the British Commander-in-Chief was promising Botha, as a condition of peace, money from the British Exchequer for the rebuilding of the Boer farms already burned by the English in the year 1900!

So much for the documents and conversation referred to by Mr. Chamberlain on the 20th of January, 1902.

Writing to the Uitlander Committee of Cape Town, early in September, 1901, Lord Milner, through his private secretary, made the following frank avowal of the cause which led to the formation of the concentration camps:

"The formation of concentration camps has been adopted purely on military grounds as a means of hastening the end of the war, which is, after all, the first interest of the refugees themselves; and as a military measure it is, his Excellency believes, succeeding.—London 'Morning Leader,' October 7, 1901."

In the Blue Book presented to Parliament in June, 1900 ("Correspondence between the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa and the Boer Commanders"), there are other facts and statements which blow to the winds the Colonial Secretary's "humanity" explanations.

On the 3rd of February, 1900, Presidents Kruger and Steyn addressed a communication to Lord Roberts, calling his attention to "the burning and blowing up of farmhouses and of the devastation to farms and of goods therein, whereby unprotected women and children are deprived of food and cover" (Blue Book, page 3).

Lord Roberts replies, saying that the charges thus made had not been substantiated, and that it was his intention to conduct the war with "as little injury as possible to peaceable inhabitants and private property."

On the 13th of May, Lord Roberts issued a proclamation from Bloemfontein, warning all persons against the wanton destruction of public or private property within the territories of the Free State and South African Republic (p. 4).

On the 16th of May, General Botha replied to this proclamation (a copy of which Lord Roberts had sent to him), giving specific cases of such destruction, and adding: "Your troops continue to carry on the greatest barbarities" (p. 5).

Lord Roberts replies, on May 18, saying the cases referred to by General Botha "are found to be devoid of foundation."

General De Wet sends Lord Roberts, on the 19th of May, a list of farms burned by the British.

Lord Roberts answers by saying there were reasons why these farms were destroyed, which justified the action (p. 5).

On the 4th of July, General Botha addressed a further protest to Lord Roberts, and gave him another list of Boer farms burned by the English, including Botha's own farm, and that of Field Cornet Badenhorst, near Standerton.

On the 10th of July, General De Wet wrote to Lord Roberts, giving him a list of farms burned near Lindley and Heilbron, and declaring he would retaliate upon British property in the Free State and Cape Colony, "in order to put a stop to such barbarities," unless the farm-burning was discontinued by Lord Roberts' troops (p. 7).

On the 28th of July, Lord Roberts replied to General Botha, saying he had not yet received reports about farm-burning near Standerton, and expressing the hope that the reported destruction of Botha's own farm was unfounded. He, however, declares that, where telegraph or railway lines have been cut by Boer forces, farms in the vicinity will be destroyed.

In a letter to General De Wet, dated August 3, Lord Roberts definitely declares: "I have found it necessary (in consequence of alleged shooting of British from certain farmhouses) to take such steps as are sanctioned by the customs of war to put an end to these and to similar acts, and have burned down the farmhouses at or near which such deeds have been perpetrated."

On the 13th of August, Lord Roberts encloses a copy of a report from General Buller, in which this officer admits having ordered the burning of General Louis Botha's farm, along with several others in the Standerton district, because telegraph wires had been cut and the railway injured, and—the Boers had, in fact, continued opposing General Buller's forces.

The English general who thus admitted ordering the destruction of General Botha's farm, was he who previously had been driven four times across the Tugela by Botha—General Buller.

On the 15th of August, General Botha again brings under Lord Roberts' notice the continued burning of farms, and of women and children being driven from their homes and compelled to walk for miles to other shelter, owing to the looting of their conveyances. He complains of small bodies of British going about in the character of scouts, but who are robbers, committing theft under the guise of English soldiers. He further categorically denies the statements in General Buller's report that there were any reasons beyond those prompted by the spirit of barbarism for the burning of his own and other farms near Standerton.

To this communication, Lord Roberts replied in a letter ending as follows:

"I should be failing in my duty to Her Majesty's Government and to Her Majesty's Army in South Africa if I neglected to use every means in my power to bring such irregular warfare to a conclusion. The measures which I am compelled to adopt are those

which the customs of war prescribe as being applicable to such cases; they are ruinous to the country, entail endless suffering on your Honor's fellow countrymen, and must, I regret to inform your Honor, necessarily become more and more rigorous" (p. 12).

On the 2nd of September, Lord Roberts further wrote to General Botha, saying, *inter alia:*

"The orders I have at present issued, to give effect to these views, are that the farm nearest the scene of any attempt to injure the line or wreck a train is to be burnt, and that all farms within a radius of ten miles are to be completely cleared of all their stock, supplies, etc." (p. 12).

If any further proof were needed in refutation of Mr. Chamberlain's charges against General Botha they are found in the Colonial Secretary's own admissions, when he was defending Lord Roberts for the burning of farms a year before the interview between Lord Kitchener and the Transvaal Commandant-General had taken place. Speaking in the House of Commons, on the 7th of December, 1900, Mr. Chamberlain said:

"Lord Roberts was placed in the most difficult position. He had his base at least 1,500 miles away from his front in a most difficult country, and served only by a single line of railway. Any catastrophe to that railway might have been a catastrophe to the whole army. It is all very well to talk about humanity, but we must take into account humanity to our army. (Ministerial cheers.) It was the clear duty of Lord Roberts to take any steps in his power to prevent the cutting of the lines; accordingly it was proclaimed that in the case of destruction of the line persons in the vicinity would be held responsible, and farms might be destroyed."

The Colonial Secretary's statement on the 20th of January, 1902 ("the humanity, unprecedented in the history of war, with which we, upon whom these women and children have been forced, have accepted the duty and responsibility in the name of humanity," etc.), read in the light of the foregoing extracts from his own Blue Books, and specific assertions as quoted above, is nothing less than a gross insult to the public intelligence.

Further evidence is not needed with which to refute what Mr. Chamberlain's own documents completely deny; but two additional pieces of testimony will further illustrate the value that is to be attached to English Ministerial charges against the Boers. On the 4th of June, 1900, as related under that date in the Diary of the War, General Buller had an interview with General Christian Botha, near Laing's Nek. The English general's report of

the conversation to Lord Roberts is printed at pages 85 and 86 of the "South African Despatches," Vol. II., February, 1901. General Buller reports himself as saying to Botha (p. 85): "If the war goes on, the Boers' stock would be lost, *their homes destroyed*, and their property would suffer a great deal of damage, and he wants to avoid that."

It was on the 24th of the following month this same chivalrous, English officer reported to Lord Roberts that he had burned Commandant-General Louis Botha's farm and others near Standerton.

In the Blue Book relating to the number of Boer farms burned by the British, which has been already quoted from, the following samples of the reasons given for the destruction of the homes of the men engaged in the war against the English are found:

"Destroyed because the owner was on commando, and the house near where the accident and destruction of Rhenoster Station took place. This man had taken an active part in destruction of line and station, so it was stated. Men's kits were found in this house.

"Letters were sent to fighting General Lemmer to warn him of the consequences if he touched the telegraph line. He cut it three times, so his three wretched hovels at Zamenkomst, where the break occurred, were burnt.

"Izaak Buurman was the leader of a band which persistently attacked the railway line south of this section. In his house was found a roll of his commando.

"J. H. Visagie shot native scout "Bob," and had been on commando with the Wakkerstroomers since he is stated to have surrendered and taken the oath of neutrality.

"Men on commando in the immediate neighborhood, notice having previously been sent to the laager that their houses would be burned if they did not come in, or were not at their houses by the date.

"This house was burnt without orders, and culprits cannot be traced. The man, however, is one of the Magaliesberg snipers.

"This man was reported to have shot a man in Roberts's Horse while watering his horse, and so his house was burnt."

The same Blue Book contains this official record of the burning of the following home:

District.	Name of Village or Farm.	Name of Owner.	Date of Destruction.	Reasons for Destruction.
Rhenoster River.	—	Christian De Wet.	—	—

This narrative of an unexampled struggle for National Freedom must close here, for the present. The conflict which it endeavors

to describe still continues, and, if honorable conditions are not obtained as the price of peace, will go on until no Boers are left to defend a cause which British numbers alone have struck down.

The story of the war, as I have attempted to tell it, from the Boer point of view, is not, and necessarily could not be, a full or complete version of the whole campaign. Indeed, the later portion of the history has been mainly compiled from information gleaned through anti-Boer sources. Yet no British censorship can silence, and no stereotyped English laudation of its own prowess can keep back from the public everywhere, the knowledge of the continued, dauntless fight of this little nation of heroes for their country's independence. For fully two years and five months the Boers still in the field have fought against the cruelest odds which ever enabled a purpose of naked wrong to triumph by the mere weight of brute force over a righteous cause heroically upheld. With commandoes decimated, homes destroyed, wives and children in prison camps, babies dying of "military measures," stock and food looted, crops uprooted, and devastation carried systematically by England's quarter of a million of men into almost every corner of the Transvaal and Free State, still the men who believe in God and freedom gave way only to death or to overwhelming opposition. Loss of artillery, of supplies, of almost everything except faith and courage, saw them at Vlakfontein, Itala, Brakenlaagte, Tweefontein, Tweebosh, and in a dozen other victories gallantly achieved, show the enemy, even when armed with artillery, how easily this war could have settled forever the question of who should rule in the Transvaal, if manhood and not numbers had to determine that right.

The other branches of the British task of killing two small States reflect an equal glory on British arms.

England not only poured her countless thousands of troops into South Africa, armed savages in her service, and burned Boer homes; she took the most unfair advantage of her puny antagonist which a spirit of vindictive malice could suggest. She had control of the cables, the ports, and of the press (having ordered the correspondents of independent papers out of the theater of operations), and, thus secure against either Boer or impartial testimony, her officers and news agencies commenced an ignoble campaign of calumny against the foemen who had won a world's kindly interest in a cause so splendidly upheld. Accusations of "murder" against General De Wet, of outrages upon wounded British against De la Rey, of the deliberate killing of Kaffirs—including Kaffir children—against Botha's officers, and kindred charges, were cabled to London time and time again. The purpose of these methods of

moral assassination was apparent to the public. It was to deaden or to kill the universal sympathy felt for the fate of the Republics by besmirching the fame and reputation of the men who had at Dundee, Nicholson's Nek, Stormberg, Magersfontein, Colenso, Spion Kop, and in a hundred other engagements humbled British arms in the dust, and exhibited to the Great Powers the weakness of England's boasted military might in the capacity of her officers and the fighting qualities of her troops.

And it was the generals and officers who had deliberately burned the homes of their adversaries in defiance of every code of soldierly honor, as well as of civilized warfare, who could thus also malign the characters of the Boer generals when these could not be heard in self-defense in the press of the world.

There are to-day 45,000 women watching 50,000 children inside of barbed wire fences surrounded by British soldiers, arms in hand, in South Africa. They are imprisoned in camps in which 14,000 of these children have died already of sickness induced by the cold and the privations inflicted upon them in one year. They were taken from their homes by England's troops as a military measure, and they are still imprisoned as a means of subduing the spirit of resistance of husbands, fathers, and sons fighting for independence. These women are bearing their sufferings in a spirit of the noblest patriotism. They address no appeal or reproach to the burghers in the field on account of the hardships to which they are subjected. Their children die before their eyes, but they still defiantly bid their country's defenders to continue the fight against the callous and unmanly foe that can disgrace civilized humanity by warring upon the helpless as well as the combative section of the two Republics. These are, surely, nobler heroines than those of romance who are loved and honored for the imaginary devotion with which they remain true to some idea that has kinship with the bravery of men engaged in a just and holy cause. But the world looks on—the civilized Christian world of churches, and of preachers of the Gospel, and of novel readers—at this barbarous spectacle in South Africa, with about as much real indignation as if Lord Kitchener and his 220,000 troops were inflicting all the horrors of British warfare upon a Commonwealth of criminals or brigands, and not upon two little Republics made up of one of the bravest races in Europe, and of the most intensely and sincerely Protestant Christian people on earth.

This same world of churches and of moralists is that which a few years ago called out hysterically for the punishment of Turkey on account of outrages perpetrated upon Armenian Christians. America, Great Britain, France, were appealed to in behalf of a

people who do not possess a single racial quality or moral trait that could compare with the Christian manliness of the Boer nation. Had 14,000 Armenian children been slain by "the military measures" of Abdul Hamid, the ships of France, America, and of England would have entered the Dardanelles in obedience to the outraged feelings of a united Christian world. But Abdul Hamid does not own gold mines, or regulate the money-markets of Paris, New York, and Berlin from Constantinople. He has not this "Christian" advantage. Moreover, he is a Mohammedan. He is outside the pale of Christianity, and can therefore be coerced into a compliance with the humane mandate of an interested Christian public opinion.

England has killed 14,000 Christian children, has imprisoned 45,000 Christian women in barbed wire enclosures, has devastated two Christian countries where there was less poverty and less vice than in any other Christian community in the world, and has armed savages to help her in a war which had its origin in motives as base and as odious as ever prompted a Sultan of Turkey to burn an Armenian village or to massacre his rebellious subjects. And yet Cardinal Vaughan,* in the name of the Catholic Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury in behalf of the Protestants, and Mr. Hugh Price Hughes for the Nonconformists, of the same enlightened Christian nation, piously call down God's blessing upon the arms which are killing and exterminating a little Christian nation in South Africa. And the United States, Austria, and other countries, equally Christian, enlightened, and humane, sell horses and supplies to the power which wages such a war.

The explanation of this horrible anomaly in the moral standards of the day is not far to seek. England, by her money markets and press and commerce; by her howling hypocrisy in pulpit and Parliament; has successfully mammonized the world. By her ra-

* "It is now a question of something more than of what is lawful. The question is, Shall the British Empire be allowed to fall to pieces by supineness and by want of determination and self-denial? The answer is, No.

"This Empire has been raised up by the same Providence that called the Roman Empire into existence, and as God used the one towards the attainment of His own Divine purposes of mercy, so does He seem to be using the other.

"While we realize with grateful confidence the most honorable mission with which God seems to have entrusted us, we must endeavor not to be altogether unworthy of it, and must determine to make God, both in national and private life, the first object of our love and service. And then, we must be ready personally and collectively to make every sacrifice necessary or useful for the fulfilment of His trust.

"For these purposes, you will please to recite on Sundays, until further orders, after the principal Mass or at Benediction, the prayers to be found in the 'Manual' among the 'Occasional Prayers,' and headed 'In Times of Calamity.'

"HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN."

tionalistic missionaries, her newspapers, and the influence of her wealth, she has morally debased Christianity, and has enthroned the creed of human cupidity in the Temple out of which the gentle Savior of Nazareth, with his gospel of love and of justice and humanity, once banished the money changers. This is why Cardinals and Archbishops, papers and stock exchanges, politicians and cabinets, look on as unmoved at the horrors of the concentration camps as the Herodian High Priests probably did at the measures which carried out the wholesale murder of the Judean children 1,900 years ago. It also explains why a United States, a France, and a Germany continue, at least in their Governments, the passive spectators of the most dishonorable and unchristian war which has ever disgraced a civilized age.

END

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